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CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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AN EXTRACT

FROM THE REV. MR. FLETCHER'S

*Polemical Essay.*







*La Héliche J. Goe*

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION,

BEING

AN EXTRACT

from

The Rev. Mr. FLETCHER'S

POLEMICAL

ESSAY:

containing his

DEFINITION OF PERFECTION,

and

HIS ADDRESSES

to

IMPERFECT and PERFECT BELIEVERS.

To which is added,

ON THE SAME SUBJECT,

THE COPY OF A LETTER,

BY THOMAS RUTHERFORD.

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Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is  
in heaven is perfect.-----JESUS CHRIST.

Mark the perfect man.-----DAVID.

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Blackburn :

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1797.

CHRISTIAN MISSION

BY THE

THE MISSIONARY

TOLENTINE

ESSAY

ON THE

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## PREFACE.

*CHRISTIAN* Perfection, according to the account which both Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher have given of it, and consequently in the sense in which the Methodists believe and teach it, is only another name for that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Hence, every unprejudiced person must allow, that it is of the deepest importance to christian believers, all of whom are called to go on to perfection, and to press towards this mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

But in order that they may do so, it is highly necessary, 1. That Christian Perfection be set before them in a clear, distinct, and scriptural point of view. 2. That the way and manner in which they are to go on, and press towards THIS mark of their high calling, so as actually to attain it, be plainly marked out to them. 3. That some suitable directions be given to such as have attained it, to assist them to stand fast in the glorious

liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, to walk so as to please God, and to let no man take their crown. Now all these are done in the following tract, by one whose praise, as a Writer, as a Minister of Jesus Christ, and as a Christian, is in all the Churches; and who was himself a shining example of Christian Perfection.

I once heard him say, in a meeting of religious friends, "It seems to me but a small thing to  
 "be saved from all sin; I want to be filled with  
 "all the fulness of God." At the same time, he expressed an earnest desire that all who were like-minded should wrestle with God in prayer for the fulness of the Spirit, as the hundred and twenty disciples did before the day of Pentecost. He then gave out the following lines with some that pre-  
 cede them,

"Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call,

"Spirit of burning come.

"Refining fire go thro' my heart,

"Illuminate my soul,

"Scatter thy life thro' every part,

"And sanctify the whole."

After which he said, "The next time I  
 "preach,

*"preach, I will preach on the promise of the Spirit." Which he did a night or two after, with great enlargement, from John vii. 37—39. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: But this spoke he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. And if I mistake not, the Sunday night following, he preached from these words, The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force, Matth xi. 12. And his word was with such demonstration of the Spirit and power, that I felt as if the kingdom of heaven would burst upon us while he was preaching: And all within me cried, Thy kingdom come!—Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!*

*He was the most devoted, the most heavenly, the most Christ-like man I ever saw. Like a faithful mirror, he continually received, and reflected the image and glory of his Lord. He breathed incessant prayer and praise. He constantly soared above, and yet sat at the feet of every one. By  
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*the indwelling power and fulness of the Holy Ghost, his soul was kindled into a flame of divine love, and did indeed "burn with inextinguishable blaze" for the glory of God, and the salvation of his fellow creatures. All places, and all company were alike to him. His constant care and business was, to sink and rise deeper and higher into God, and to prevail with all around him to do the same. And the more intimately any were acquainted with him, the more cause they saw to affirm, that there was none occasion of stumbling in him.*

*I am deeply sensible that his worth does not need my insignificant testimony. But his name and his memory to me, are like ointment poured forth. I had, for several years, an uncommon desire to see him, insomuch that I often involuntarily repeated these words of our Lord to his disciples: With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you.—With desire I have desired to see Mr. Fletcher. And God fulfilled my desire at a time, and in a way which I had not thought of: For in August 1783, at the earnest request of the Preachers and the Society in Dublin, he and Mrs. Fletcher visited that City, where I*  
*had*



*had an opportunity of being in company with him, almost every day, morning, noon and night, and of hearing him preach five or six times a week, for near two months; which (especially when I consider what a remarkable blessing he was made to me, and the dear people of that society in general, who received him as an angel of God) I have ever viewed as a signal instance of the divine condescension and goodness, to an unworthy creature: At the recollection of those days (for they were days of the Son of man!) and of what I, and many, then heard, and saw, and felt, my heart overflows with gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.*

*I have not made this extract with a view to prevent any from reading the whole of the Polemical Essay: By no means. I hope it will have the contrary effect. That excellent Treatise is equally calculated to inform the Judgment, and influence the Heart. There the Doctrine of Christian Perfection is explained at great length, and unanswerably defended. But many of those who see the necessity of Christian Perfection, and who earnestly desire to enjoy, and walk worthy of it, and to whom therefore the two following addresses*



*are peculiarly needful; have neither time nor inclination, and some of them but little capacity for reading controversy. Many also can but ill afford half a crown, or three shillings. Hence, my view, in what I have done, is to remove these obstacles, and to spread, as far as possible, what, by the blessing of God, is calculated to be extensively useful, and is so necessary to be well understood, and carefully attended to, by all who desire to perfect holiness in the fear of God.*

*In both the addresses there are several quotations (and some of them pretty long) from what Mr. Wesley has written on the subject. So that this small tract contains the sentiments and instructions of those two eminent Ministers of Jesus Christ, concerning this great work of his Spirit in the soul.*

*That the Lord may attend it with his blessing, and make it the means of spreading holiness of heart and life, is the earnest prayer of*

**T. RUTHERFORD.**

Manchester, Jan. 23, 1796.

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## POLEMICAL ESSAY.

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### SECTION I.

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#### *Christian Perfection defined.*

**W**E call *Christian Perfection* the maturity of grace and holiness, which established, adult believers attain to under the Christian Dispensation; and, by this means, we distinguish that maturity of grace, both from the ripeness of *grace* which belongs to *the Jews below us*, and from the ripeness of *glory* which belongs to *departed saints above us*. By *Christian Perfection*, therefore, we mean nothing but the *cluster* and *maturity* of graces and gracious habits which compose the *Christian* character in the church *militant*.

In other words, *Christian Perfection* is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars, *perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity* for our *visible* enemies, as well as for our *earthly* relations —

relations — and above all, *perfect love* for our *invisible* God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase, *perfect love*, instead of the word *perfection*; understanding by it, the *pure* love of God, shed abroad in the heart of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is *abundantly* given them under the fulness of the Christian dispensation,

## SECTION II.

*An Address to imperfect believers, who cordially embrace the doctrine of Christian Perfection shewing how they may attain the end of their faith, and be filled with all the fulness of God.*

**Y**OUR regard for scripture and reason, and your desire to be crucified with Christ, and conformed to his image, have happily kept, or reclaimed you both from pharisaism and antinomianism. In opposition to the former, ye believe all the woes which the Gospel denounces against the proud and the self-righteous, and all the blessings which it promises to the humble and the contrite ones. Ye see that Christ is the door, the way, the truth, and the life, and ye expect all your salvation through him. Hence, having no confidence in the flesh, ye come to him; ye sit at his feet; ye take his easy yoke upon you, and daily learn of him who is *meek and lowly in heart*: and in opposition to the latter, ye see the absolute necessity of personally fulfilling the law of Christ: your bosoms glow with desire to perfect holiness in the fear

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of God: and far from blushing to be called *perfectionists*, ye openly assent, that a perfect faith productive of perfect love to God and man, is the pearl of great price, for which you are determined to sell all, and which (next to Christ) you will seek early and late as the one thing needful for your spiritual and eternal welfare. Some directions therefore, how to seek so as to find this inestimable pearl cannot but be acceptable to you, if they be scriptural and rational; and such, I trust, are those which follow:

1. If ye would attain *Christian Perfection*, let your full assent to the truth of that deep doctrine firmly stand upon the evangelical foundation of a *precept* and a *promise*. A *divine precept* and a *divine promise* form an unshaken foundation for faith. Let therefore your faith deliberately rest upon these PRECEPTS.

Hear, O Israel,—*thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*, Deut. vi. 5. *Thou shalt not hate thy neighbour in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people: but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord: ye shall keep my statutes*, Lev. xix. 17, 18. And now Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve  
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*the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good, Deut. x. 12, 13.*

Should unbelief suggest, that these are only *old-testament injunctions*, trample upon the false suggestion, and let your faith rest also upon the following *new-testament precepts*: *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I say unto you, Love your enemies: Bless them that curse you: Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, Matth. v. 17, -- 44, &c. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ, Gal. vi. 2. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you, John xv. 12. He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law: for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, &c. Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 8, --- 10. If ye fulfil the royal law, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But, if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. Whosoever shall keep*  
*the*



*the whole law (of liberty) and yet offend in one point, (in uncharitable respect of persons,) he is guilty of all. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty, (which requires perfect love, and therefore makes no allowance for the least degree of uncharitableness,) James ii. 8,---12.*

When you stedfastly believe these evangelical precepts and proclamations, lest you should stagger for want of a *promise* every way adequate to such weighty commandments, cordially embrace, and, without wavering, rest upon the following promises, extracted from the old testament. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. Deut. xxx. 6. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isa. i. 18. I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God (in a new and peculiar manner :) for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer. xxiv. 7. & xxxi. 33. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your fil-*  
*thiness;*



*shiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you : a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, Ezek. xxxvi. 25,---27.*

And let none suppose, that the promises of the *circumcision*, the *sprinkling with clean water*, the *cleansing*, the being *white as snow*, and the *spirit*, which are mentioned in these scriptures, and by which the hearts of believers are to be made *new*, and God's law is to be so written therein, that they shall *keep his judgments and do them* ; let none, I say, suppose that these glorious promises belong only to the Jews ; for their full accomplishment peculiarly refers to the Christian dispensation. Besides, if *sprinklings of the spirit* were sufficient, under the Jewish dispensation, to raise the plant of *Jewish* perfection in *Jewish* believers ; how much more will the revelation of the *horn of our salvation*, and the *out-pourings* of the spirit raise the plant of *Christian* Perfection in faithful Christian believers ! And, that this revelation of Christ, in the spirit, as well as in the flesh, these effusions of the water of life, these baptisms of fire, which burn up the chaff of sin, throughly purge God's spiritual floor, save us from all our uncleannesses, and deliver us  
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from all our enemies; that these blessings, I say, are *peculiarly* promised to Christians, is demonstrable by the following cloud of new testament declarations and promises.

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets,---that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without (unbelieving) fear, (that is, with perfect love) in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life, Luke i. 68, 75. Blessed are the poor in spirit, who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for THEY SHALL BE FILLED, Matth. v. 3,---6. If thou knewest the gift of God, &c thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water: and the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of living water springing up to everlasting life, John iv. 10,---14. Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, (when I shall have ascended up on high, to receive gifts for men) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, (to cleanse his soul, and to keep it clean.) But this spake he of THE SPIRIT, which they that BELIEVE in him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified, and his spiritual dispensation was not yet fully opened, John vi. 37,---39. Mr. Wesley in his plain account of Christian Perfection, has published some excellent queries, and proposed them to those*  
who

who deny it to be attainable in this life. They are close to the point, and run thus:  
 1. "Has there not been a *larger measure* of  
 "the Holy Spirit given under the gospel  
 "than under the Jewish dispensation? If  
 "not, in what sense was *the spirit not given*  
 "before Christ was *glorified*?" 2. "Was  
 "that *glory which FOLLOWED the sufferings*  
 "*of Christ*, (1 Pet. i. 11.) an external glory,  
 "or an internal, viz. the glory of holiness?"  
 Always rest the doctrine of Christian Perfection, on this scriptural foundation, and it will stand as firm as revelation itself.

It is allowed on all sides, that the dispensation of John the Baptist exceeded that of the other prophets, because it immediately introduced the Gospel of Christ, and because John was not only appointed to *preach the baptism of repentance*, but also clearly to point out the very person of Christ, and to *give knowledge of sa'vation to God's people by the remission of sins*, Luke i. 77.: and nevertheless, John only promised the blessing of the spirit, which Christ bestowed when he had received gifts for men. *I indeed, said John, baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I... He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*, Matth. iii. 11. Such is the importance of this promise, that it is particularly recorded, not only by the three other evangelists, (see Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. and John i. 26.)

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but also by our Lord himself, who said, just before his ascension: *John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence, Acts i. 4, 5.*

So capital is this promise of the *spirit's* stronger influences to raise the rare plant of Christian Perfection, that when our Lord speaks of this promise, he emphatically calls it, *The promise of the Father*; because it shines among the other promises of the Gospel of Christ, as the moon among the stars. Thus Acts i. 4. *Wait, says he, for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me.* And again, Luke xxiv. 9. *Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you.* Agreeably to this, St. Peter says, *Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this:* He has begun abundantly to fulfil that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out (bestow a more abundant measure) of my spirit upon all flesh.* Therefore repent and be baptized (that is, make an open profession of your faith) *in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins: and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call (to enjoy the full blessings of the Christian dispensation,)* Acts ii. 17, --- 33, 38. This promise (when it is received in its fulness) is undoubtedly  
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the greatest of all the *exceedingly great and precious promises* which are given to us, that by them you might be partakers of the divine nature, (that is, of pure love and unmixed holiness) 2 Pet. i. 4. Have therefore a peculiar eye to it, and to these deep words of our Lord, *I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth (and power) whom the world knew not,—but ye knew him, for he remaineth with you, and shall be in you. At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you: For, If any man (that is, any believer) love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, John xiv. 15, 23.* “Which,” says Mr. Wesley, in his note on the place, “implies such a large manifestation of the divine presence and love, that the former in justification, is as nothing in comparison of it.”

To make you believe this important promise with more ardour, consider that our Lord spent some of his last moments in sealing it with his powerful intercession. After having prayed the Father to sanctify his disciples *through the truth* firmly embraced by their faith, and powerfully applied by his spirit, he adds, *neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.* And what is it that our Lord asks for these believers? Truly what St.

Paul asked for the imperfect believers at Corinth, *even their perfection*. 2 Cor. xiii. 9. which state of soul our Lord describes thus: *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us, &c. that they may be one as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected in one, and that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me*, John xvii. 17,—23. Our Lord could not pray in vain: It is not to be supposed, that the scriptures are silent with respect to the effect of this solemn prayer, an answer to which, was to give the world an *idea* of the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven—a *specimen* of the power, which introduces believers into the state of Christian Perfection, and therefore we read, that, on the day of Pentecost, the kingdom of Satan was powerfully shaken; and the kingdom of God (righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost) began to come with a new power: Then were thousands wonderfully converted, and clearly justified: Then was the kingdom of heaven taken by force; and the love of Christ, and of the brethren, began to burn the chaff of selfishness and sin with a force which the world had never seen before. See Acts ii. 42, &c. Some time after, another glorious baptism, or capital outpouring of the Spirit carried believers farther into the kingdom of the grace, which perfects them in one. And therefore



therefore we find that the account which St. Luke gives us of them after this second, capital manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in a great degree answers to our Lord's prayer for their perfection. He had asked *that they all might be one*—that they might be *ONE*, as the Father and he are *ONE*,—and that they might be perfected in *ONE*, John xvii. 17, &c. And now a fuller answer is given to his deep request. Take it in the words of the inspired historian: *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were (once more) filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word with (still greater) boldness: And the multitude of them that believed were of ONE HEART, and of ONE SOUL; neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed were his own, but they had all things common,—and great grace was upon them all, Acts iv. 31, 32.* Who does not see in this account a specimen of that great grace, which our Lord had asked for believers, when he prayed, that his disciples, and those who should believe on him through their word, might be *perfected in one*?

It may be asked here, whether *the multitude of them that believed* in those happy days, were *all* perfect in love? I answer, that, if pure love had cast out *all* selfishness and sinful fear from their hearts, they were undoubtedly *made perfect in love*; but as God does not usually remove the plague of indwelling sin



till it has been discovered and lamented ; and as we find in the two next chapters, an account of the *guile* of Ananias and his wife, and of the *partiality* or selfish *murmuring* of some believers, it seems that those chiefly, who before were strong in grace, rose *then* into fathers ; and that the first love of other believers (through the peculiar blessing of Christ upon his infant-church) was so bright and powerful for a time, that *little children* had, or seemed to have, the strength of *young men*, and young men the grace of *fathers*. With respect to the *great grace* which was *upon them all*, this does not *necessarily* mean that they were all *equally* strong in grace, for *great* unity and happiness may rest upon a whole family, where the difference between a *father*, a *young man*, and a *child*, continues to subsist. However it is not improbable, that God, to open the dispensation of the *Spirit* in a manner, which might fix the attention of all ages upon its importance and glory, permitted the whole body of believers to take an *extraordinary* turn together into the Canaan of perfect love, and to show the world the admirable fruit which grows there, as the spies sent by *Joshua*, took a turn into the good land of promise before they were settled in it, and brought from thence the bunch of grapes which astonished and spirited up the Israelites, who had not yet crossed Jordan.

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Upon the whole, it is (I think) undeniable, from the four first chapters of the Acts, that a peculiar power of the spirit is bestowed upon believers under the gospel of Christ; that this power, through faith on our part, can operate the most sudden and surprising change in our souls; and that, when our faith shall *fully* embrace the promise of *full* sanctification, or of a complete *circumcision of the heart in the spirit*, the Holy Ghost, who kindled so much love on the day of pentecost, that all the primitive believers *loved*, or *seemed* to love each other *perfectly*, will not fail to help us to *love one another* without sinful self-seeking; and as soon as we do so, *God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*, 1 John iv. 12. John xiv. 23.

Should you ask, how many baptisms, or effusions of the sanctifying spirit, are necessary to cleanse a believer from all sin, and kindle his soul into perfect love? I reply, that the effect of a sanctifying truth depending upon the *ardour* of the faith with which that truth is embraced, and upon the *power* of the spirit with which it is applied, I should betray a want of modesty, if I brought the operations of the Holy Ghost, and the energy of faith, under a rule which is not expressly laid down in scripture. If one powerful baptism of the spirit *seals you unto the day of redemption, and cleanses you from all (moral) filthiness*, so much the better. If two, or more are necessary,

the Lord can repeat them: *His arm is not shortened that he cannot save*; nor is his promise of the Spirit stinted: He says in general, *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more will your heavenly Father (who is goodness itself) give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him!....* I may, however, venture to say in general, that before we can rank among *perfect* Christians, we must receive so much of the truth and spirit of Christ by faith, as to have the pure love of God and Man shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, and to be filled with the meek and lowly mind which was in Christ. And if one outpouring of the Spirit, one bright manifestation of the sanctifying truth so empties us of self, as to fill us with the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus, we are undoubtedly *Christians* in the full sense of the word.... From the ground of my soul, I therefore subscribe to the answer which a great divine makes to the following objection:

“ But some who are newly justified do  
 “ come up to this (*Christian Perfection*;) what  
 “ then will you say to these?” Mr. Wesley  
 replies with great propriety, ‘ If they really  
 ‘ do, I will say, they are sanctified, saved  
 ‘ from sin *in that moment*: and that they never  
 ‘ need lose what God has given, nor feel sin  
 ‘ any more. But certainly this is an exempt  
 ‘ case.

' case. It is otherwise with the generality  
 ' of those that are justified. They feel in  
 ' themselves, more or less pride, anger, self-  
 ' will, and an heart bent to backsliding.  
 ' And till they have *gradually* mortified these,  
 ' they are not fully renewed in love. God  
 ' usually gives a considerable *time* for men  
 ' to receive *light*, to grow in *grace*, to *do* and  
 ' *suffer* his will before they are either justified  
 ' or sanctified. But he does not invariably  
 ' adhere to this. Sometimes he *cuts short his*  
 ' *work*. He does the work of many years  
 ' in a few weeks: perhaps in a week, a day,  
 ' an hour. He justifies or sanctifies both  
 ' those who have *done or suffered* nothing, and  
 ' who have not had *time* for a gradual work  
 ' either in *light* or *grace*. And may he not  
 ' do what he *will with his own*? *Is thine eye*  
 ' *evil, because he is good*? It need not there-  
 ' fore be proved by forty texts of scripture;  
 ' either that most men are perfected in love  
 ' *at last*, or that there is a gradual work of  
 ' God in the soul; and that, generally speak-  
 ' ing, it is a *long time*, even many years, be-  
 ' fore sin is destroyed. All this we know.  
 ' But we know likewise, that God *may*, with  
 ' man's good leave, *cut short his work*, in what-  
 ' ever degree he pleases, and do the usual  
 ' work of many years in a moment. He  
 ' does so in many instances. And yet there  
 ' is a gradual work both *before* and *after* that  
 ' moment. So that one may affirm the work

‘ is *gradual*; another it is *instantaneous*, without any manner of contradiction.’ *Plain Account*, page 115, &c.—Page 155, the same eminent divine explains himself more fully, thus: ‘ If Christian Perfection is constantly preceded and followed by a *gradual* work; is it in itself *instantaneous* or not? In examining this let us go on step by step. An *instantaneous* work has been wrought in some believers: None can deny this. Since that change they enjoy *perfect* love. They feel this, and this alone. They rejoice ever more, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks. Now this is all I mean by *perfection*. Therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.’ “ But in some this change was not instantaneous.” ‘ They did not perceive the instant when it was wrought: It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies. Yet there is an instant when life ceases. And if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.’ “ But if they have this love now, they will lose it.” ‘ They may; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it *now*. They *now* experience what we teach. They *now* are all love. They *now* rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing.’

II. When you firmly assent to the truth of the *precepts* and *promises*, on which the doctrine

doctrine of Christian Perfection is founded : When you understand the meaning of these scriptures, *sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth. I will send the comforter (the spirit of truth and holiness) unto you. God has chosen (eternal) salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth :* When you see, that the way to Christian Perfection is by the word of the Gospel of Christ, by *faith*, and by the *Spirit* of God ; in the next place get tolerably clear ideas of *this* perfection. This is absolutely necessary. If you will hit a mark, you must know where it is. Some people aim at *Christian Perfection* ; but mistaking it for *angelical perfection*, they shoot above the mark, miss it, and then peevishly give up their hopes. Others place the mark as much too low : Hence it is, that you hear them profess to have attained Christian Perfection, when they have not so much as attained the mental serenity of a philosopher, or the candour of a good-natured conscientious heathen. In the preceding definition, if I am not mistaken, the mark is fixed according to the rules of scriptural moderation. It is not placed *so high*, as to make you despair of hitting it, if you do your best in an evangelical manner ; nor yet *so low*, as to allow you to presume that you can reach it, without exerting all your abilities to the uttermost, in due subordination to the efficacy of Jesus' blood, and the Spirit's sanctifying influences.

III. Should



III. Should ye ask, Which is the way to Christian Perfection? Shall we go to it by internal stillness, agreeable to this direction of Moses and David, *The Lord will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. Stand still and see the salvation of God. Be still and know that I am God. Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still?* Or shall we press after it by an internal wrestling, according to these commands of Christ, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force, &c.?*

I answer, that the way to perfection is by the due combination of prevenient, assisting *free-grace*; and submissive, assisted *free-will*. Antinomian stillness therefore, which says free-grace must do all, is not the way. Pharisaic activity, which will do most, if not all, is not the way. Join these two partial systems; allowing *free-grace* the lead and high pre-eminence which it so justly claims; and you do justice to the doctrines of *mercy* and *justice*—of *free-grace* and *free-will*—of *divine faithfulness* in keeping the covenant of grace, and of *human faithfulness* in laying hold of that covenant, and keeping within its bounds: In short, you have the scripture-method of waiting upon God, which Mr. Wesley describes thus:

RESTLESS, *resign'd*, for God I wait:

For God my VEHEMENT soul *stands still*,

To



To understand these lines, consider that *faith* is alternately an *humble, passive receiver*, and an *active, zealous labourer*: First, it *passively* receives the influence of divine grace, saying, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Let it be done unto me according to thy word*: And then, it actively brings forth its heavenly fruit with earnest labour.—*God worketh in you to will and do*, says St. Paul. Here he describes the *passive* office of faith, which submits to, and acquiesces in, every divine dispensation and operation.—*Therefore work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*, and, of consequence, with haste, diligence, ardour and faithfulness: Here the apostle describes the *active* office of *faith*, which carefully lays out, and diligently improves the talent it has already received. Would you then wait aright for christian perfection? Let your faith in the doctrine of *free-grace*, and Christ's righteousness, fix your mind upon God, as your only centre and all-sufficient portion: So shall you *stand still* according to the first texts produced in the question. And then, let your faith in the doctrine of *free-will*, and *evangelical obedience*, make you steadily run the circle of duty around that firm centre; so shall you, by this activity subordinate to grace, *take the kingdom of heaven by force*. When your heart quietly rests in God by faith, then the poet's expressions, "*resigned*," and "*stands still*," describe

describe its fixedness in God. But when your heart swiftly moves towards God by faith, when your ardent soul follows after God, as a thirsty deer does after the water-brooks, then these words of the poet, "*restless,*" and "*vehement,*" properly belong to faith, and describe its exercise. In order to go steadily on to perfection, you must therefore endeavour steadily to *believe*; and, as there is opportunity, diligently persevere in *the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.*

IV. Another question has also puzzled many earnest seekers of christian perfection; and the solution of it may remove a considerable hindrance out of your way. 'Is christian perfection, say they, to be *instantaneously* brought down to us? Or are we *gradually* to grow up to it? Shall we be made perfect in love by an habit of holiness suddenly infused into us, or by acts of feeble faith, and feeble love so frequently repeated as to become strong, habitual, and evangelically-natural to us, according to the well-known maxim, *A strong habit is a second nature?*'

Both ways are good; and instances of some believers *gradually* perfected, and of others (comparatively speaking) *instantaneously* fixed in perfect love, might probably be produced, if we were acquainted with the experiences of *all* those, who have died in a  
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state of evangelical perfection. It may be with the root of sin, as it is with its fruit: Some souls parley many years, before they can be persuaded to give up *all* their outward sins, and others part with them as it were *instantaneously*. You may compare the former to those besieged towns which make a long resistance, or to those mothers who go through a tedious and lingering labour: And the latter resemble those fortresses, which are surprized and carried by storm; or those women who are delivered almost as soon as labour comes upon them. Travellers inform us that vegetation is so quick and powerful in some warm climates, that the seeds of some vegetables yield a sallad in less than twenty-four hours. Should a northern philosopher say, impossible! And should an English gardener explain against such *mushroom-sallad*, they would only expose their prejudices, as do those who decry instantaneous justification, or mock at the possibility of the instantaneous destruction of indwelling sin.

For where is the absurdity of this doctrine? If the light of a candle brought into a dark room can *instantly* expel the darkness; and if, upon opening your shutters at noon, your gloomy apartment can instantaneously be filled with meridian light; why might not the instantaneous rending of the veil of unbelief, or the sudden and full opening of the eye of your faith, instantly fill your soul with  
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the light of truth, and the fire of love; supposing the sun of righteousness arise upon you with powerful healing in his wings? May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul, as quickly as the spirit descended upon our Lord at his baptism? Did it not descend *as a dove*, that is, with the soft motion of a dove, which swiftly shoots down, and instantly lights? A good man once said, with truth, "A mote is little, when it is compared to the sun, but I am far less before God." Alluding to this comparison, I ask, If the sun could instantly kindle a mote; nay, if a burning glass can in a moment calcine a bone, and turn a stone to lime, how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose, that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying spirit, and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into an heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure seraphic love!

An appeal to parallel cases may throw some light upon the question which I answer. If you were sick, and asked of God the perfect recovery of your health, how would you look for it? Would you expect to have your strength restored you *at once*, without any external means, as the lepers who were *instantly* cleansed; and as the paralytic, who, at our Lord's Word, took up the bed on which

which he lay, and carried it away upon his shoulders? Or by using some external means of a slower operation, as the ten lepers did, who were more *gradually cleansed as they went to shew themselves to the priests*: or as king Hezekiah, whose gradual, but equally sure recovery, was owing to God's blessing upon the poultice of figs prescribed by Isaiah? Again: If you were blind, and besought the Lord to give you perfect human sight; how would you wait for it? As Bartimeus, whose eyes were opened in an instant: or as the man who received his sight by degrees. At first he saw nothing: by and by he confusedly discovered the objects before him, but at last he *saw all things clearly*. Would you not earnestly wait for an answer to your prayers *now*; leaving to divine wisdom the particular manner of your recovery? And why should you not go and do likewise, with respect to the dreadful disorder which we call *indwelling sin*?

If our hearts are *purified by faith*, as the scripture expressly testifies; if the *faith* which peculiarly purifies the heart of Christians, is a faith in *the promise of the Father*, which promise was made by the Son, and directly points at a peculiar effusion of the Holy Ghost, the purifier of spirits;—if we may believe in a moment;—and if God may in a moment, seal our sanctifying faith by sending us a fulness of his sanctifying spirit;

spirit; if this, I say, is the case; does it not follow, that to deny the possibility of the *instantaneous* destruction of sin; is to deny (contrary to scripture and matter of fact) that we can make an *instantaneous* act of faith in the sanctifying promise of the Father, and in the all-cleansing blood of the Son, and that God can seal that act by the instantaneous operation of his spirit? which St. Paul calls *the circumcision of the heart in (or by) the spirit*, according to the Lord's ancient promise, *I will circumcise thy heart to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?* Where is the absurdity of believing that the God of all grace can *now* give an answer to the poet's rational and evangelical request?

Open my faith's interior eye:

Display thy glory from above;

And sinful self shall sink and die,

Lost in astonishment and love.

If a momentary display of Christ's bodily glory, could in an instant turn *Saul*, the blaspheming, bloody persecutor, into *Paul*, the praying, gentle apostle; if a sudden sight of Christ's hands, could in a moment root up from Thomas' heart, that detestable resolution, *I will not believe*, and produce that deep confession of faith, *My Lord and my God!* What cannot



cannot the display of Christ's spiritual glory, operate in a believing soul, to which he manifests himself, *according to that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself?*—Again, If Christ's body, could in an instant, become so glorious on the mount, that his very garments partook of the sudden irradiation, became not only free from every spot, but also *white as the light, shining exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them;*—and if our bodies *shall be changed; if this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality* **IN A MOMENT, in the TWINKLING OF AN EYE, at the last trump;** why may not our believing souls, when they fully submit to God's terms, be fully changed—fully turned from the power of Satan unto God? When the Holy Ghost says, *Now is the day of salvation,* does he exclude salvation from heart-iniquity? If Christ now deserves *fully the name of Jesus, because* he (fully) saves his (believing) people from their sins; and if now the gospel-trumpet sounds; and sinners arise from the dead, why should we not, upon the performance of the condition, be changed in a moment from indwelling sin to indwelling holiness; or in the twinkling of an eye, pass from indwelling death to indwelling life?

This is not all: If you deny the possibility of a quick destruction of indwelling sin, you send to hell, or to some unscriptural purgatory,

gatory, not only the dying thief, but also all those martyrs who suddenly embraced the Christian faith, and were instantly put to death by bloody persecutors, for confessing the faith which they had *just* embraced. And if you allow, that God may *cut short his work in righteousness* in such a case, why not in other cases? Why not especially when a believer confesses his indwelling sin, ardently prays that Christ **WOULD**, and sincerely believes that Christ **CAN NOW** *cleanse him from all unrighteousness*?

None are so apt to laugh at the *instantaneous* destruction of sin as the Calvinists, and yet (such is the inconsistency which characterises some men!) their doctrine of believers being delivered from all sin in the article of death, is built upon it. For, if you credit them, *all* dying believers have a nature which is *still morally* corrupted, and an heart which is *yet desperately wicked*. These believers, still full of indwelling sin, instantaneously breathe out their last, and (without any peculiar act of faith, without any peculiar out-pouring of the sanctifying spirit) corruption is instantaneously gone. The indwelling *man of sin* is entirely consumed, and, behold, the souls which would not hear of the instantaneous act of sanctifying faith, which receives the *indwelling* spirit of holiness—the souls which pleaded hard for the continuance of indwelling sin are in a moment made completely  
sinless;

sinless; and, in the twinkling of an eye, they appear in the third heaven among the spirits of just Christians made perfect in love! Such is the doctrine of our Calvinian brethren; and yet, they think it incredible that God should do for us, while we pray in faith, what they suppose death will do for them (or at least what will be done for them) when they lie in his cold arms, perhaps delirious or senseless!

On the other hand, to deny that imperfect believers may, and do gradually grow in grace, and of course that the remains of their sins may, and do gradually decay, is as absurd, as to deny that God waters the earth by daily dews, as well as by thunder showers; it is as ridiculous, as to assert that no body is carried off by lingering disorders, but that all men die suddenly, or a few hours after they are taken ill.

I use these comparisons about death to throw some light upon the question which I solve, and not to insinuate that the decay and destruction of sin run parallel to the decay and dissolution of the body, and that, of course, sin must end with our bodily life. Were I to admit this unscriptural tenet, I should build again what I have all along endeavoured to destroy, and (as I love consistency) I should promise eternal salvation to all unbelievers; for unbelievers, I presume, will *die*, as well as believers. Nor do

I see why death should not be able to destroy the *van* and the *main body* of sin's forces, if it can so readily cut the *rear* (the remains of sin) in pieces.

From the preceding observations, it appears, that believers *generally* go to Christian Perfection, as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. They toiled some time very hard, and with little success. But after they had *rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, It is I, be not afraid: Then they willingly received him into the ship, and IMMEDIATELY the ship was at the land whither they went.* Just so we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our heart; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection. Or (to use another illustration) God says to believers, Go to the Canaan of perfect love. Arise: why do you tarry? Wash away the remains of sin, calling (that is, believing) on the name of the Lord. And if they submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he said, *Arise, and go towards the South.* For when they *arise and run, as Philip did, the Spirit of the Lord takes them, as he did the evangelist; and they are found in the new Jerusalem, as Philip was found at Azotus.*

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*They dwell in God, and God dwells in them, and his love is perfected in them.*

Hence it follows, that the most evangelical method of following after the perfection to which we are immediately called, is that of seeking it *now*, by endeavouring *fully* to lay hold on the promise of that perfection through faith, just as if our repeated acts of obedience could never help us forward. But in the mean time we should do the work of faith, and repeat our internal and external acts of obedience with as much earnestness, and faithfulness, according to our present power, as if we were sure to enter into rest merely by a diligent use of our talents, and a faithful exertion of the powers which divine grace has bestowed upon us. If we do not attend to the first of these directions, we shall seek to be sanctified by works like the Pharisees; and if we disregard the second, we shall slide into solitudian sloth with the Antinomians.

V. Beware therefore of unscriptural refinements. Set out for the Canaan of perfect love, with a firm resolution to labour for the rest which remains on earth for the people of God. Some good, mistaken men, wise above what is written, and fond of striking out paths, which were unknown to the apostles—new paths marked out by voluntary humility, and leading to antinomianism,—some people of that stamp, I say, have made it their business,

ness, from the days of Augustin, to decry making resolutions. They represent this practice as a branch of what they are pleased to call *legality*. They insinuate that it is utterly inconsistent with the knowledge of our inconstancy and weakness; In a word, they frighten us from the first step to Christian Perfection;—from an humble, evangelical determination to run, till we reach the prize, or, if you please, to go down till we come to the lowest place.

You will never steadily go on to perfection, unless you get over this mistake. Let the imperfectionists laugh at you for making humble resolutions; but go on *stedfastly purposing to lead a new life*, as says our church; and in order to this *stedfastly purpose* to get a *new heart* in the full sense of the word: For so long as your heart will continue partly *unremoved*, your life will be partly *unholy*. And therefore St. James justly observes, that, *if any man offend not in word, he is a perfect man*, he loves God with all his heart, his heart is *fully renewed*; it being impossible that an heart still tainted in part with vanity and guile, should always dictate the words of sincerity and love. Your good resolutions need not fail: nor will they fail, if, under a due sense of the fickleness and helplessness of your unassisted free-will, you properly depend upon God's faithfulness and assistance. However should they fail, as they probably  
will



will do more than once, be not discouraged, but repent, search out the cause, and in the strength of free-grace, let your assisted free-will renew your evangelical purpose, till the Lord seals it with his mighty *fiat*, and says, *Let it be done to thee according to thy resolving faith.* It is much better to be laughed at, as “poor creatures who know nothing of themselves,” than to be deluded as foolish virgins, who fondly imagine their vessels are full of imputed oil. Take therefore the sword of the spirit, and boldly cut this dangerous snare in pieces. Conscious of your impotence, and yet determined to lay out every talent, say with the prodigal son, *I will arise, and go to my father;*—and with David, *I will love thee, O Lord my God:—I will behold thy face in righteousness:—I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;—I will keep it, as it were with a bridle:—I have said that I would keep thy word:—The proud (and they who are humble in an unscriptural way) have had me exceedingly in derision, but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.—I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* Say with St. Paul, *I am determined not to know any thing save Jesus, and him crucified;* and with Jacob, *I will not let thee go, unless thou blest me.* And to sum up all good resolutions in one, say, “I have engaged to renounce all the vanities of this wicked world, all the sinful lusts of  
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“ the flesh, and all the works of the devil;  
 “ to believe all the articles of the Christian  
 “ faith; and to keep God’s commandments  
 “ all the days of my life.” That is, I have  
 most solemnly resolved to be a perfect Chris-  
 tian. And this resolution I have publicly  
 sealed by receiving the two sacraments upon  
 it. Nor do I only think that I am bound  
 to keep this vow, but “ by God’s grace,  
 “ so I will; and I heartily thank our hea-  
 “ venly Father, that he has called me to  
 “ this state of salvation, (and Christian Per-  
 “ fection;) and I pray unto him, to give me  
 “ his grace, that I may (not only attain it,  
 “ but also) continue in the same to my life’s  
 “ end.”

“ Much diligence (says Kempis) is ne-  
 “ cessary to him that will profit much. If  
 “ he who firmly purposeth, often faileth,  
 “ what shall he do, who seldom or feebly  
 “ purposeth any thing?” But (I say it again  
 and again) do not lean upon your *free-will*,  
 and good *purposes*, so as to encroach upon the  
 glorious pre-eminence of *free-grace*. Let it  
 stand invariably in its *proper* and *honourable*  
 place. Lay your *principal* stress upon divine  
 mercy, and say with the good man whom I  
 have just quoted, “ Help me, O Lord God,  
 “ in thy holy service, and grant that I may  
 “ now this day begin perfectly.”

In following this method, you will so de-  
 pend upon God’s *free-grace*, as not to fall  
 into

into *pharisaic* running; and you will so exert your own *free-will*, as not to slide into *antinomian* sloth. Your course lies exactly between these rocks. To pass these perilous straits your resolving heart, through the spiritually-magnetic touch of Christ *the corner stone*, must acquire and preserve a heavenly polarity.

VI. From this direction flows the following advice. Resolve to be perfect *in yourselves*, but not *of yourselves*. The Antinomians boast that they are perfect only in their heavenly representative. Christ was filled with perfect humility and love: They are perfect in his person: They need not a perfection of humble love in themselves. To avoid their error, be perfect *in yourselves*, and not in another: Let your perfection of humility and love be inherent; let it dwell in you. Let it fill your *own* heart and influence your *own* life: So shall you avoid the delusion of the virgins, who give you to understand that the oil of their perfection is all contained in the sacred vessel which formerly hung on the cross, and therefore their salvation is finished, they have oil enough in that rich vessel; manna enough and to spare in that golden pot. Christ's heart was perfect, and therefore theirs may safely remain imperfect, yea, full of indwelling sin, till death, the messenger of the bridegroom come to cleante, and fill them with perfect love at

the midnight cry ! Delusive hope ! Can any thing be more absurd than for a sapless, dry branch to fancy that it has sap and moisture enough in the vine which it cumbers ? Or for an impenitent adulterer to boast, that *in the Lord he has chastity and righteousness* ? Where did Christ ever say, have salt IN ANOTHER ? Does he not say, *take heed that ye be not deceived* ?—*Have salt in yourselves*, Mark ix. 50. Does he not impute the destruction of stony ground-hearers to their *not having root in themselves*, Matth. xiii. 21. If it was the patient man's comfort, *that the root of the matter was found in him*, is it not deplorable to hear modern believers say, without any explanatory clause, that they have nothing but sin *in themselves* ? But is it enough to have *the root in ourselves* ? Must we not also have *the fruit*—yea, *be filled with the fruits of righteousness*, Phil. i. 11. Is it not St. Peter's doctrine, where he says, *if these things be in you, and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 8. And is it not that of David, where he prays, *create in me a clean heart, &c.* Away then with all Antinomian refinements : And if, with St. Paul, you will have salvation and rejoicing in yourselves and not in another ; make sure of holiness and perfection *in yourselves, and not in another.*

But while you endeavour to avoid the  
snare

snare of the Antinomians, do not run into that of the Pharisees, who will have their perfection of *themselves*; and therefore, by their own unevangelical efforts, self-concerted willings, and self-prescribed runnings, endeavour to *raise sparks of their own kindling*, and to *warm themselves by their own painted fires*, and fruitless agitations. Feel your impotence. Own that *no man has quickened* (and perfected) *his own soul*. Be content to invite, receive, and welcome the light of life: but never attempt to form or to engross it. It is your duty to wait for the morning light, and to rejoice when it visits you; but were you to grow so self-conceited as to say, 'I will create a sun; *Let there be light*;' or if, when the light visits your eyes, you should say, 'I will bear a stock of light, I will so fill my eyes with light to-day, that to-morrow I shall almost be able to do my work without the sun, or at least without a constant dependance upon its beams;' would ye not betray a species of self deifying idolatry, and satanical pride? If our Lord himself (as *son of man*) would not have one grain of human goodness, *of himself*, if he said, *Why callest thou me good? There is none good* (self-good, or good of himself) *but God*; who can wonder enough at those proud Christians, who claim some self-originated goodness; boasting of what they have received as if they had not received it; or using what they

they have received without an humble sense of their constant dependance upon their heavenly Benefactor? To avoid this horrid delusion of the Pharisees, learn to see, to feel, and to acknowledge, that of the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost, are all your *Urim* and *Thummim*; your *lights* and *perfections*: And while the Lord says, *From me is thy fruit found*, Hof. xiv. 8. bow at his foot-stool, and gratefully reply, *Of thy fulness have all we received, and grace for grace*, John i. 16. For thou art *the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift*, James i. 17. *Of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things: To thee (therefore) be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Rom. xi. 36.

VII. You will have this humble and thankful disposition, if you let your repentance cast deeper roots. For if Christian Perfection implies a forsaking of all *inward*, as well as *outward* sin; and if true repentance is a grace "*whereby we forsake sin*," it follows, that, to attain Christian Perfection we must so follow our Lord's evangelical precept, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, as to leave no sin—no bosom-sin—no heart-sin—no indwelling sin *unrepented of*, and of consequence *unforsaken*. He whose heart is still full of *indwelling sin*, has no more truly repented of indwelling sin, than the man whose mouth is still defiled with filthy talking and jesting, has truly repented of his ribaldry. The deeper



deeper our sorrow for, and detestation of indwelling sin is, the more penitently do we confess *the plague of our heart*; and when we properly confess it, we inherit the blessing promised in these words, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

To promote this deep repentance, consider how many spiritual evils still haunt your breast. Look into the inward *chamber of imagery*, where assuming self-love, surrounded by a multitude of vain thoughts, foolish desires, and wild imaginations, keeps her court. Grieve that your heart, which should be all flesh, is yet partly stone; that your soul which should be only a temple of the Holy Ghost, is yet so frequently turned into a den of thieves, an hole for the cockatrice, a nest for a brood of spiritual vipers—for the remains of envy, jealousy, fretfulness, anger, pride, impatience, peevishness, formality, sloth, prejudice, bigotry, carnal confidence, evil shame, self-righteousness, tormenting fears, uncharitable suspicions, idolatrous love, and I know not how many of the evils which form the retinue of hypocrisy and unbelief. Through grace detect these evils by a close attention to what passes in your own heart at all times, but especially in an hour of temptation. By frequent and deep confession, drag out all these abominations. These sins, which would not have  
Christ

Christ to reign alone over you, bring before him : place them in the light of his countenance ; and (if you do it in faith) that light, and the warmth of his love, will kill them, as the light and heat of the sun kill the worms, which the plow turns up to the open air in a dry summer's day.

Nor plead that you can do nothing : For, by the help of Christ, who is always ready to assist the helpless, ye can solemnly say upon your knees, what ye have probably said in an airy manner to your professing friends. If ye ever acknowledged to them, that your heart is deceitful, prone to leave undone what ye ought to do, and ready to do what ye ought to leave undone ; ye can undoubtedly make the same confession to God. Complain to him who *can* help you, as you have done to those who *cannot*. Lament, as you are able, the darkness of your mind, the stiffness of your will, the dullness or exorbitancy of your affections, and importunately intreat the God of all grace to *renew a right spirit within you*. *If ye sorrow after this godly sort, what carefulness will be wrought in you ! what indignation ! what fear ! what vehement desire ! what zeal ! yea, what revenge ! . . .* Ye will then sing in faith, what many sing in unbelief :

O how I hate those lusts of mine,

That crucified my God ;

Those sins that pierc'd and nail'd his flesh

Fast to the fatal wood.

Yes,

Yes, my Redeemer, *they shall DIE,*  
*My heart hath so decreed;*  
*Nor will I spare those guilty things,*  
*That made my Saviour bleed.*

Whilst with a melting, broken heart,  
 My murder'd Lord I view,  
 I'll raise revenge against my sins,  
 And SLAY *the murderers too.*

VIII. Closely connected with this deep repentance is the practice of a judicious, universal self-denial. *If thou wilt be perfect,* says our Lord, *deny thyself: Take up thy cross daily, and follow me. He that loveth father, or mother, (much more he that loveth praise, pleasure or money) more than me, is not worthy of me: Nay, whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose it for my sake, shall save it.* Many desire to live and reign with Christ, but few chuse to suffer and die with him. However, as the way of the cross leads to heaven, it undoubtedly leads to Christian Perfection. To avoid the cross therefore, or to decline drinking the cup of vinegar and gall, which God permits your friends or foes to mix for you, is to throw away the aloes, which divine wisdom puts to the breasts of the mother of harlots, to wean you from her and her witchcrafts: It is to refuse a medicine which is kindly prepared

pared to restore your health and appetite: In a word, it is to renounce the physician who *heals all our infirmities* when we take his bitter draughts, submit to have our imposthumes opened by his sharp lancet, and yield to have our proud flesh wasted away by his painful caustics. Our Lord *was made a perfect Saviour through sufferings*, and we may be made perfect Christians in the same manner. We may be called to suffer, till all that which we brought out of spiritual Egypt is consumed in an howling wilderness, in a dismal Gethsemane, or on a shameful Calvary. Should this lot be reserved for us, let us not imitate our Lord's imperfect disciples, who *forsook him and fled*, but let us stand the fiery trial, till all our fetters are melted, and all our dross purged away. Fire is of a purgative nature: It separates the dross from the gold; and the fiercer it is, the more quick and powerful is its operation. *He that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, &c. when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, Isa. iv. 4. I will bring the third part through the fire, saith the Lord, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God, Zech. xiii. 9.*  
 There-

Therefore, if the Lord should suffer the *best* men in *his* camp, or the *strongest* men in Satan's army, to cast you into a furnace of fiery temptations, come not out of it till you are called. *Let patience have its perfect work.* Meekly keep your trying station, till your heart is disengaged from all that is earthly, and till the sense of God's preserving power kindles in you such a faith in his omnipotent love, as few experimentally know, but they who have seen themselves like the mysterious bush in *Horeb*, burning and yet unconsumed; or they who can say with St. Paul, *We are killed all the day long; and behold we live!*

“ Temptations (says Kempis) are often  
 “ very profitable to men, though they be  
 “ troublesome and grievous: for in them  
 “ a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.  
 “ All the saints have passed through, and  
 “ profited by many tribulations: And they  
 “ that could not bear temptations, became  
 “ reprobates, and fell away.” “ My son  
 “ (adds the author of Ecclesiasticus, chap.  
 “ ii. i.) if thou come to serve the Lord,”  
 (in the *perfect beauty of holiness*) “ prepare thy  
 “ soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright;  
 “ constantly endure; and make not haste in  
 “ the time of trouble. Whatever is brought  
 “ upon thee, take cheerfully; and be pati-  
 “ ent when thou art changed to a low estate:  
 “ for gold is tried and purified in the fire,  
 “ and acceptable men in the furnace of ad-  
 “ versity

“ verity.” And therefore, says St. James, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for, when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, James i. 12.* Patiently endure then, when God for a season (if need be) will suffer you to be in heaviness through manifold temptations. By this means, the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7.

IX. Deep repentance is good, gospel self-denial is excellent, and a degree of patient resignation in trials is of unspeakable use to attain the perfection of love: But as faith immediately works by love, it is of far more immediate use to purify the soul. Hence it is, that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, so strongly insist upon faith; assuring us that, if we will not believe, we shall not be established,—that, if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God,—we shall be saved,—and rivers of living water shall flow from our inmost souls; that our hearts are purified by faith; and that we are saved by grace through faith: They tell us, that Christ gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it—by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Now,



Now, if believers are to be *cleansed and made without blemish* BY THE WORD (which testifies of the all-atoning blood, and of the power and love of the Spirit) it is evident that they are to be sanctified *by faith*; for *faith, or believing*, has as necessary a reference to the word, as *eating* has to *food*. For the same reason the apostle observes, that *they who believe enter into rest*;—that a *promise being left us of entering into rest, we should therefore fear, and take heed not to fall short of it through unbelief*;—that we ought to take warning by the Israelites, who could not enter into the land of promise, *because of unbelief*;—that we are *filled with all joy and peace in believing*;—and that *Christ is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God through him*. Now *coming*, in the scripture language is another expression for *believing*: *He that cometh to God* (says the apostle) *must believe*;—and our Lord cries, *I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst*. Hence, it appears that *faith* is peculiarly necessary to those who will be *saved to the uttermost*,—especially a firm faith in the capital promise of the Gospel of Christ—the promise of the *Spirit of holiness*, from the Father, through the Son. For, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* Or, how can they earnestly plead the truth, and steadily wait for the performance of a promise, in which

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they

they have no faith?—This doctrine of faith is supported by St. Peter's words; *God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost—and purifying their hearts by faith, Acts xv. 8, 9.* For the same spirit of faith, which in part purifies our hearts when we cordially believe the pardoning love of God, completely cleanses them when we fully believe his sanctifying love.

X. This direction about faith being of the utmost importance, I shall confirm and explain it by an extract from Mr. Wesley's forty-third sermon, which points out “*The scripture-way of salvation.*” “*Though it be*  
 ‘ allowed (says this judicious divine) that  
 ‘ both this repentance and its fruits are ne-  
 ‘ cessary to full salvation, yet they are not  
 ‘ necessary either in the same sense with faith,  
 ‘ or in the same degree; not in the same degree;  
 ‘ for these fruits are only necessary condi-  
 ‘ tionally, if there be time and opportunity  
 ‘ for them, otherwise a man may be sancti-  
 ‘ fied without them. But he cannot be sanc-  
 ‘ tified without faith. Likewise let a man  
 ‘ have ever so much of this repentance, or  
 ‘ ever so many good works, yet all this does  
 ‘ not at all avail, he is not sanctified till he  
 ‘ believes. But the moment he believes  
 ‘ with, or without those fruits, yea, with  
 ‘ more or less of this repentance, he is sanc-  
 ‘ tified. Not in the same sense; for this re-  
 ‘ pentance and these fruits are only remotely  
 necessary,

' necessary, necessary in order to the con-  
 ' tinuance of his faith, as well as the increase  
 ' of it: whereas faith is *immediately* and di-  
 ' rectly necessary to sanctification. It remains  
 ' that *faith* is the only condition, which is  
 ' *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to  
 ' sanctification.

' But what is that faith whereby we are  
 ' sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in  
 ' love? It is a *divine evidence and conviction*,  
 ' 1. That God hath promised it in the holy  
 ' scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied  
 ' of this, there is no moving one step further.  
 ' And one would imagine there needed not  
 ' one word more, to satisfy a reasonable man  
 ' of this, than the ancient promise, *Then will*  
 ' *I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed,*  
 ' *to love the Lord your God with all your heart,*  
 ' *and with all your soul.* How clearly does  
 ' this express the being perfected in love?  
 ' How strongly imply the being saved from  
 ' all sin? For as long as love takes up the  
 ' whole heart, what room is there for sin  
 ' therein?—2 It is a *divine evidence and con-*  
 ' *viction*, that what God has promised he is  
 ' able to perform. Admitting therefore that  
 ' *with men it is impossible*, to bring a clean  
 ' thing out of an unclean, to purify the heart  
 ' from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness;  
 ' yet this creates no difficulty in the case,  
 ' seeing *with God all things are possible*.—3. It  
 ' is an *evidence and conviction*, that he is able

' and willing to do it *now*. And why not?  
 ' Is not a moment with him the same as a  
 ' thousand years? He cannot want more  
 ' time to accomplish whatever is his will.  
 ' We may therefore boldly say, at any point  
 ' of time, *Now is the day of salvation, Behold!*  
 ' *All things are now ready! Come to the mar-*  
 ' *riage!*—4. To this confidence, That God  
 ' is both able and willing to sanctify us now,  
 ' there needs to be added one thing more,  
 ' *a divine evidence and conviction, That he doth*  
 ' *it.* In that hour it is done. God says to  
 ' the inmost soul, *According to thy faith, be*  
 ' *it unto thee!* Then the soul is pure from  
 ' every spot of sin; *it is clean from all un-*  
 ' *righteousness.*'

Those who have low ideas of *faith*, will  
 probably be surprized to see how much Mr.  
 Wesley ascribes to that Christian grace, and  
 to inquire why he so nearly connects our  
*believing that God cleanses us from all sin*, with  
*God's actual cleansing of us from all sin*. But  
 their wonder will cease, if they consider the  
 definition which this Divine gives of *faith* in  
 the same sermon. ' Faith, in general (says  
 ' he) is defined by the apostle, *An evidence,*  
 ' *a divine evidence and conviction* (the word,  
 ' used by the apostle means both) *of things*  
 ' *not seen*: not visible, nor perceivable either  
 ' by sight, or by any other of the external  
 ' senses. It implies both a supernatural *evi-*  
 ' *dence* of God, and of the things of God, a  
 ' kind

' kind of *spiritual light* or perception thereof;  
 ' accordingly the scripture speaks of God's  
 ' giving sometimes light, sometimes a power  
 ' of discerning it. So St. Paul. *God who*  
 ' *commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath*  
 ' *shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the*  
 ' *knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of*  
 ' *Jesus Christ.* And elsewhere the same apostle  
 ' speaks of *the eyes of our understanding be-*  
 ' *ing opened.* By this *two-fold operation of the*  
 ' *Holy Spirit*, having the eyes of our souls  
 ' both opened and inlightened, we see the  
 ' things which the natural eye hath not seen,  
 ' neither the ear heard. We have a prospect  
 ' of the invisible things of God: we see the  
 ' *spiritual world* which is all round about us,  
 ' and yet no more discerned by our natural  
 ' faculties, than if it had no being: and we  
 ' see the *eternal world*, piercing through the  
 ' veil which hangs between time and eter-  
 ' nity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon  
 ' it no more, but we already see the glory  
 ' which shall be revealed.'

From this striking definition of faith it is  
 evident, that the doctrine of this address ex-  
 actly coincides with Mr. Wesley's Sermon;  
 with this verbal difference only, that what  
 he calls *faith* implying a *two-fold operation of*  
*the Spirit* productive of *spiritual light*, and  
*supernatural sight*! I have called *faith* apprehending a sanctifying *baptism* (or *out-pouring*)  
*of the Spirit.* I make this remark for the sake

of those who fancy, that, when a doctrine is clothed with expressions which are not quite familiar to them, it is a *new* doctrine, although these expressions should be as scriptural as those of a *baptism*, or *out-pouring of the Spirit*, which are used by some of the prophets, by John the Baptist, by the four evangelists, and by Christ himself.

I have already pointed out the close connection there is, between an act of *faith* which *fully* apprehends the sanctifying promise of the Father, and the power of the Spirit of Christ, which makes an end of moral corruption by forcing the lingering man of sin *instantaneously* to breathe out his last. Mr. Wesley in the above-quoted sermon touches upon this delicate subject in so clear and concise a manner, that I shall transcribe the whole passage, and by this means, put the seal of that eminent Divine to what I have advanced, in the preceding pages, about sanctifying faith, and the quick destruction of sin.

‘ Does God work this great work in the  
 ‘ soul *gradually* or *instantaneously*? Perhaps it  
 ‘ may be gradually wrought in some: I mean  
 ‘ in this sense: They do not advert to the  
 ‘ particular moment, wherein sin ceases to  
 ‘ be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it  
 ‘ the will of God, that it should be done  
 ‘ *instantaneously*; that the Lord should de-  
 ‘ stroy sin *by the breath of his mouth*, in a mo-  
 ‘ ment,



' ment, in the twinkling of an eye. And  
 ' so he generally does: A plain fact, of  
 ' which there is evidence enough to satisfy  
 ' any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore  
 ' look for it every moment. Look for it in  
 ' the way above described; in all those *good*  
 ' *works*, whereunto thou art created anew  
 ' in Christ Jesus. There is then no danger:  
 ' you can be no worse, if you are no better  
 ' for that expectation. For were you to be  
 ' disappointed of your hope, still you lose  
 ' nothing. But you shall not be disappointed  
 ' of your hope: it will come, and will not  
 ' tarry. Look for it then every day, every  
 ' hour, every moment. Why not this hour,  
 ' this moment? Certainly you may look for  
 ' it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And  
 ' by this token you may surely know whither  
 ' you seek it by faith or by works. If by  
 ' works, you want something to be done  
 ' *first! before* you are sanctified. You think,  
 ' "I must first *be* or *do* thus, or thus." Then  
 ' you are seeking it by works unto this day.  
 ' If you seek it by faith, you may expect it  
 ' *as you are*: And if as you are, then expect  
 ' it *now*. It is of importance to observe that  
 ' there is an inseparable connection between  
 ' these three points, expect it *by faith*, ex-  
 ' pect it *as you are*, and expect it *now*! To  
 ' deny one of them is to deny them all: to  
 ' allow one is to allow them all. Do you be-  
 ' lieve, we are sanctified *by faith*? Be true

' then to your principle; and look for this  
 ' blessing just as you are, neither better nor  
 ' worse, as a poor sinner, that has still no-  
 ' thing to pay, nothing to plead, but *Christ*  
 ' *died*. And if you look for it *as you are*,  
 ' then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing:  
 ' Why should you? Christ is ready; and he  
 ' is all you want. He is waiting for you;  
 ' he is at the door! Let your inmost soul  
 ' cry out,

' Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest!

' Nor hence again remove:

' But sup with me, and let the feast

' Be everlasting love.'

XI. *Social prayer* is closely connected with  
*faith*, in the capital promise of the sanctify-  
 ing Spirit; and therefore I earnestly recom-  
 mend that mean of grace (where it can be  
 had) as being eminently useful to the attain-  
 ing of Christian perfection. When many  
 believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle  
 with God in prayer together, you may com-  
 pare them to many diligent hands, which  
 work a large pump. At such times, parti-  
 cularly, the fountains of the great deep are  
 broken up, the windows of heaven are  
 opened, and *rivers of living water flow* from  
 the heart of obedient believers,

In Christ when brethren join,  
 And follow after peace,  
 The fellowship divine  
 He promises to bleſs,  
 His chiefest graces to beſtow,  
 Where two or three are met below,

Where unity takes place,  
 The joy of heaven we prove;  
 This is the goſpel grace,  
 The unction from above,  
 The Spirit on all believers ſhed,  
 Deſcending ſwift from Chriſt their head.

Accordingly we read, that, when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Penticoſt, the diſciples *were all with one accord in one place*. And when he confirmed that kingdom, they were liſting up *their voice to God with one accord*. See Acts ii. 1. & iv. 24.

XII. But perhaps thou art alone. As a ſolitary bird which ſitteth on the houſe-top, thou lookeſt for a companion who may go with thee through the deepeſt travel of the regeneration. But alas! thou lookeſt in vain: All the profeſſors *about thee* ſeem ſatisfied with their former experiences, and with ſelf-imputed or ſelf-conceited perfection. When thou giveſt them a hint of thy want of power from on high, and of thy hunger and

thirst after a fulness of righteousness, they do not sympathize with thee. And indeed how can they? *They are full already, they reign without thee, they have need of nothing.* They do not sensibly want that God would grant them, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might, by his spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they being rooted and grounded in love, may comprehend with all saints (perfected in love) what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 16—19. They look upon thee as a whimsical person, full of singular notions, and they rather damp, than enliven thy hopes. Thy circumstances are sad; but do not give place to despair, no not for a moment. In the name of Christ, who could not get even Peter, James, and John, to watch with him one hour; and who was obliged to go through his agony alone;—in his name, I say, *cast not away thy confidence, which has great recompence of reward.* Under all thy discouragements, remember that, after all, divine grace is not confined to numbers, any more than to a few. When all outward helps fail thee, make the more of Christ, *on whom sufficient help is laid for thee,*—Christ, who says, *I will go with thee through fire and water: The former shall not burn thee, nor the latter drown thee.* Jacob was alone when he

he wrestled with the angel, yet he prevailed :  
 And if *the servant is not above his master*, wonder not, that it should be said of thee, as of thy Lord, when he went through his greatest temptations, *Of the people there was none with him.*

Should thy conflicts be *with confused noise with burning and fuel of fire* ; should thy *Jerusalem be rebuilt in troublous times* ; should the Lord *shake not the earth only, but also the heaven* ; should *deep call unto deep at the noise of his water-spouts* ; should *all his waves and billows go over thee* ; should thy patience be *tried to the uttermost* ; remember how in years past thou hast tried the patience of God, nor be discouraged : An extremity, and a storm, are often God's opportunity. A blast of temptation, and a shaking of all thy foundations, may introduce the fulness of God to thy soul, and answer the end of the *rushing wind*, and of the *shaking*, which formerly accompanied the first great manifestations of the Spirit. The Jews still expect the coming of the Messiah in the flesh ; and they particularly expect it in a storm. When lightnings flash, when thunders roar, when a strong wind shakes their houses, and the tempestuous sky seems to rush down in thunder-showers : then *some* of them particularly open their doors and windows, to entertain their wished-for deliverer. Do spiritually, what they do carnally. Constantly wait for full *power from on high* : but especially  
 when

when a storm of affliction, temptation, or distress overtakes thee; or when thy convictions and desires raise thee above thyself, as the waters of the flood raised Noah's ark above the earth; then be particularly careful to throw the door of thy *faith*, and the window of thy *hope* as wide open as thou canst, and spreading the arms of thy imperfect *love*, say with all the ardour and resignation, of which thou art master,

My heart-strings groan with deep complaint,  
 My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee;  
 And every limb, and every joint,  
 Stretches for perfect purity.

But if the Lord is pleased to come *softly* to thy help; if he makes an end of thy corruptions by helping thee *gently* to sink to unknown depths of meekness; if he drowns the indwelling man of sin by baptizing—by plunging him into an abyss of humility; do not find fault with the *simplicity* of his method; the *plainness* of his appearing, and the commonness of his prescription. Nature, like *Naaman*, is full of prejudices. She expects that Christ will come to make her clean with as much ado, pomp, and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for when *he was wroth and said, Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me—and stand—and call on his God—and strike his hand over the place—and recover the leper.*

Christ



Christ frequently goes a much plainer way to work : and by this means he disconcerts all our pre-conceived notions and schemes of deliverance. *“ Learn of me to be meek and lowly in heart, and thou shalt find rest to thy soul, —the sweet rest of Christian Perfection, of perfect humility, resignation and meekness. Lie at my feet, as she did who loved much, and was meekly taken up with the good part, and the one thing needful.”* But thou frettest; Thou despisest *this* robe of perfection : It is too plain for thee : Thou slightest *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God is of great price* : Nothing will serve thy turn but a taudry coat of many colours, which may please thy proud self-will, and draw the attention of others by its glorious and flaming appearance; and it must be brought to thee with *lightnings, thunderings, and voices*. If this is thy disposition, wonder not at the divine wisdom, which thinks fit to disappoint thy lofty prejudices; and let me address thee as Naaman’s servant addressed him : *My brother, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it ? how much rather then, when he says to thee, “ I am the meek and lowly Lamb of God, wash in the stream of my blood—plunge in the Jordan of my humility, and be clean ?”* Instead therefore of going away from a plain Jesus in a rage, welcome him in his *lowest* appearance, and be persuaded that he can as easily

make

make an end of thy sin by gently coming in a *still, small voice*, as by rushing in upon thee in a *storm*; a *fire*, or an *earthquake*. The Jews rejected their Saviour, not so much because they did not earnestly desire his coming, as because he did not come in the manner in which they expected him. It is probable that some of *this* Judaism cleaves to thee. If thou *wilt* absolutely come to Mount Sion in a triumphal chariot, or make thine entrance into the New Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave then all thy lordly misconceptions behind; and humbly follow *thy king*, who makes his entry into the typical Jerusalem, *meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt the foal of an ass*. I say it again therefore, whilst thy faith and hope strongly insist on the blessing, let thy resignation and patience leave to God's infinite goodness and wisdom the peculiar manner of bestowing it. When he says, *Surely I come quickly to make my abode with thee*, let thy faith close in with his word; Ardently and yet meekly embrace his promise: It will instantly beget power; and with that power thou mayest instantly bring forth prayer, and possibly the prayer which opens heaven, humbly wrestles with God, inherits the blessing, and turns the well-known petition, *Amen, even so, Come Lord Jesus*, into the well-known praises, *He is come! He is come! Praise the Lord, O my soul, &c.*—Thus repent,

repent, believe, and obey ; and *he that cometh, will come*, with a fulness of pure, meek, humble love : *He will not tarry* : Or if he tarry, it will be to give to thy faith and desires more time to open, that thou mayest at his appearing, be able to take in more of his perfecting grace and sanctifying power : Besides, thy *expectation* of his coming is of a purifying nature, and *gradually* sanctifies thee. *He that has this hope in him, by this very hope, purifies himself, even as God is pure.* For we are saved (into perfect love) *by hope*, as well as *by faith*. The *stalk* bears the *full corn* in the ear, as well as the *root*.

Up then thou sincere expectant of God's kingdom, let thy humble, ardent free-will meet preventing, sanctifying free-grace in its weakest and darkest appearance, as the Father of the faithful met the Lord, when *he appeared to him in the plain of Mamre as a mere mortal.* *Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo three men stood by him.* So does free-grace (if I may venture upon the allusion) invite itself to thy tent : Nay, it is now with thee in its creating, redeeming, and sanctifying influences. *And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground.* Go and do likewise : If thou seest any beauty in the humbling grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sanctifying love of God, and in the comfortable fellowship of the Holy Ghost, let thy free-will

will run to meet them, and bow itself towards the ground! O for a speedy going out of thy tent—thy sinful self! O for a race of desire in the way of faith! O for incessant prostrations! O for a meek and deep bowing of thyself before thy divine deliverer!—*And Abraham said, my Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.*—O for the humble pressing of a loving faith! O for the faith which stopt the sun, when God avenged his people in the days of Joshua! O for the importunate faith of the two disciples, who detained Christ, when he made as though he would have gone farther! *They constrained him, saying, abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.* He soon indeed vanished out of their bodily sight, because they were not called always to enjoy his bodily presence. Far from promising them that blessing, he had said, *It is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you—that he may abide with you for ever.*—*He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* This promise is yea and amen in Christ; only plead it according to the preceding directions, and as sure as our Lord is the faithful and true witness, so sure will the God of Hope and love soon fill you with all joy and peace, that ye may abound

*in pure love, as well as in confirmed hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

Lift up therefore, your hands which hang down : Our *Aaron*, our heavenly High-priest, is near to hold them up : The spiritual Amalekites will not always prevail : Our *Samuel*, our heavenly prophet, is ready to cut them and their king in pieces before the Lord. The promise is unto you. You are surely called to attain the perfection of your dispensation, although you seem still afar off. Christ, in whom that perfection centers ;—Christ, from whom it flows, is very near, even at the door : Behold, says he, *I stand at the door and knock : If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, upon the fruits of my grace in their Christian perfection ; and he shall sup with me, upon the fruits of my glory, in their angelical and heavenly maturity.*

Hear his encouraging gospel : *Ask, and it shall be given you : Seek, and ye shall find : Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth : and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. If any of you (believers) lack wisdom (Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God, dwelling in his heart by faith) let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering ; for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed :*  
For

For let not that man think, that he shall receive any thing which he (thus) asketh. But whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. For all things (commanded and promised) are possible to him that believeth. He, who has commanded us to be perfect in love, as our heavenly Father is perfect, and he who has promised speedily to avenge his elect, who cry unto him day and night; —he will speedily avenge you of your grand adversary, indwelling sin. He will say to you: *According to thy faith, be it done unto thee: for he is able to do far exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think; and of his fulness we may all receive grace for grace.* We may all witness the gracious fulfilment of all the promises, which he has graciously made, that by them we might be partakers of the divine nature, so far as it can be communicated to mortals in this world. You see that, *with men*, what you look for is impossible: But show yourselves believers: Take God into the account, and you will soon experience, that, *with God* all things are possible. Nor forget the omnipotent Advocate, whom you have with him. Behold! he lifts his once pierced hands, and says, *Father, sanctify them through thy truth—that they may be perfected in one:* And, shewing to you the fountain of atoning blood, and purifying water, whence flow the streams which cleanse and gladden the hearts of believers, he says  
*‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall*



' *shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it*  
 ' *you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my*  
 ' *name : Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy*  
 ' *may be full. If I try your faith by a little*  
 ' *delay;—if I hide my face for a moment, it*  
 ' *is only to gather you with everlasting kindness.*  
 ' *Now ye have sorrow, but I will see you again,*  
 ' *and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no*  
 ' *man taketh from you. In that day ye shall*  
 ' *ask me no question, for you shall not have*  
 ' *my bodily presence. But my Urim and*  
 ' *Thummim will be with you; and the Spirit*  
 ' *of truth will himself lead you into all (chris-*  
 ' *tian) truth.'*

O for a firm and lasting faith,  
 To credit all th' Almighty faith,  
 T' embrace the promise of his Son,  
 And feel the Comforter our own.

In the mean time be not afraid to give  
 glory to God by believing in hope, against hope.  
 Stagger not at the Promise (of the Father and  
 the Son) through unbelief : but trust the power  
 and faithfulness of your Creator and Redeemer,  
 till your Sanctifier has fixed his abode in your  
 heart. Wait at mercy's door, as the lame  
 beggar did at the beautiful gate of the temple.  
 Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John,  
 said, Look on us : And he gave heed to them,  
 expecting to receive something of them. Do so

E

too :

too: Give heed to the *Father* in the *Son*, who says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*. Expect to receive the *one thing* now *needful* for you, a fulness of the sanctifying spirit. And though your patience may be tried, it shall not be disappointed. The faith and power, which (at St. Peter's word) gave the poor cripple a *perfect soundness in the presence of all* the wondering Jews, will give you (at Christ's word) a perfect soundness of heart, in the presence of all your adversaries.

" Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,

" And looks to that alone,

" Laughs at impossibilities,

" And cries, It shall be done."—

" Faith asks impossibilities :

" Impossibilities are given;

" And I, ev'n I, from sin shall cease,

" Shall live on earth the life of heaven."

Faith always works by love;—by *love of desire* at least; making us ardently pray for what we *believe* to be eminently *desirable*. And if Christian Perfection appears so to you, you might perhaps express your earnest desire of it in some such words as these: ' How long, Lord, shall my soul—thy spiritual temple, be a den of thieves, or an  
' house

' house of merchandize? How long shall  
 ' vain thoughts prophane it, as the *buyers and*  
 ' *sellors* prophaned thy temple made with  
 ' human hands? How long shall evil tem-  
 ' pers lodge within me? How long shall  
 ' unbelief, formality, hypocrisy, envy, han-  
 ' kering after sensual pleasure, indifference  
 ' to spiritual delights, and backwardness to  
 ' painful or ignominious duty, harbour these?  
 ' How long shall these *sheep and doves*, yea,  
 ' these goats and serpents defile my breast,  
 ' which should be pure as *the Holy of Holies*?  
 ' How long shall they hinder me from being  
 ' one of the *worshippers whom thou seekest*;—  
 ' one of those who worship thee *in spirit and*  
 ' *in truth*? O help me to take away these  
 ' cages of unclean birds. Suddenly come to thy  
 ' temple. Turn out all that offends the eye of  
 ' thy purity; and destroy all that keeps me  
 ' out of *the rest which remains for thy Christian*  
 ' *people*: so shall I keep a spiritual sabbath—  
 ' a Christian jubilee to the God of my life:  
 ' so shall I witness my share in *the oil of joy*,  
 ' with which thou anointest *perfect* Christians  
 ' above their fellow-believers. I stand in  
 ' need of *that* oil, Lord: My lamp burns  
 ' dim: sometimes it seems to be even gone  
 ' out, as that of the foolish virgins: It is  
 ' more like a *smoking flax*, than a *burning*  
 ' *and shining light*. O! quench it not; but  
 ' raise it to a flame. Thou knowest that I

' *do believe* in thee. The trembling hand of  
 ' my faith holds thee: and though I have  
 ' ten thousand times grieved thy pardoning  
 ' love, thine everlasting arm is still under  
 ' me, to redeem my life from destruction;  
 ' while thy right hand is over me, to crown  
 ' me with mercies and loving kindness. But  
 ' alas! I am neither sufficiently thankful for  
 ' thy *present* mercies, nor sufficiently athirst  
 ' for thy *future* favours. Hence I feel an  
 ' aching void in my soul; being conscious  
 ' that I have not attained the heights of  
 ' grace described in thy word, and enjoyed  
 ' by the holiest of thy servants. Their deep  
 ' experiences, the diligence and ardour,  
 ' with which they *did* thy will; the patience  
 ' and fortitude with which they *endured* the  
 ' cross, reproach me, and convince me of my  
 ' manifold wants. I want *power from on high*:  
 ' I want the penetrating, lasting *unction of the*  
 ' *Holy One*:—I want to have my vessel (my  
 ' capacious heart) full of the oil, *which makes*  
 ' *the countenance of wise virgins chearful*:—I  
 ' want a *lamp* of heavenly illumination, and  
 ' a fire of divine love, burning day and  
 ' night in my breast, as the typical lamps  
 ' did in the temple, and the sacred fire on  
 ' the altar:—I want a full application of  
 ' *the blood which cleanses from all sin*, and a  
 ' strong faith in thy sanctifying word;—a  
 ' *faith by which thou mayest dwell in my heart,*  
 as

' as the unwavering *hope of glory*, and the  
 ' fixed object of my love.—I want the in-  
 ' ternal *Oracle*—thy *still, small voice*, together  
 ' with thy *Urim and Thummim*, thy *lights and*  
 ' *perfections*,—the *new name*, which none knoweth,  
 ' but he that receiveth it. In a word, Lord, I  
 ' want a plenitude of thy Spirit, the full  
 ' promise of the Father, and the rivers which  
 ' flow from the inmost souls of the believers,  
 ' who have gone on to the *perfection* of the  
 ' gospel dispensation. I do believe thou  
 ' canst, and wilt thus baptize me with the *Holy*  
 ' *Ghost and with fire* : *Help my unbelief* : Con-  
 ' firm and increase my faith, with regard to  
 ' this important baptism. Lord, I have need  
 ' to be thus baptized of thee, and I am strait-  
 ' ened till this baptism be accomplished. By thy  
 ' baptisms of tears in the manger—of water  
 ' in Jordan—of sweat in Gethsemane—of  
 ' blood and fire, and vapour of smoke, and  
 ' flaming wrath on Calvary, baptize, Oh  
 ' baptize my soul, and make as full an end  
 ' of the original sin which I have from  
 ' Adam, as thy last baptism made of the  
 ' likeness of sinful flesh, which thou hadst from  
 ' a daughter of Eve. Some of thy people  
 ' look at death for full salvation from sin;  
 ' but, at thy command, Lord, I look unto  
 ' THEE. Say to my soul, I am thy salvation :  
 ' And let me feel in my heart, as well as  
 ' see with my understanding, that thou canst

' *Save from sin to the uttermost, all that come to*  
 ' *God through thee.* I am tired of forms, pro-  
 ' fessions, and orthodox notions; so far as  
 ' they are not pipes or channels to convey  
 ' life, light, and love to my dead, dark, and  
 ' stony heart. Neither the plain letter of  
 ' thy gospel, nor the sweet foretastes and  
 ' transient illuminations of thy spirit, can  
 ' satisfy the enlarged desires of my faith.  
 ' Give me thine *abiding* spirit, that he may  
 ' continually shed abroad thy love in my soul.  
 ' Come, O Lord, with that blessed spirit:—  
 ' Come Thou, and thy Father, in that holy  
 ' Comforter,—Come to make your abode  
 ' with me; or I shall go meekly mourning to  
 ' my grave.—Blessed mourning! Lord in-  
 ' crease it. I had rather wait in tears for  
 ' thy fulness, than wantonly waste the frag-  
 ' ments of thy spiritual bounties, or feed  
 ' with Laodicean contentment upon the  
 ' tainted manna of my former experiences.  
 ' Righteous Father, I hunger and thirst after  
 ' thy righteousness: Send thy Holy Spirit of  
 ' promise to fill me therewith, to *sanctify me*  
 ' *throughout*, and to seal me unto the day of  
 ' eternal redemption. *Not for works of righ-*  
 ' *teousness which I have done, but of thy mercy,*  
 ' for Christ's sake, *save thou me by the com-*  
 ' *plete washing of regeneration, and the full*  
 ' *renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And in order  
 ' to this, *pour out of thy Spirit; shed it abun-*  
 ' *dantly*



' *dantly on me*, till the fountain of living  
 ' water *abundantly* spring up in my soul, and  
 ' I can say, in the full sense of the words,  
 ' that *thou livest in me*, that *my life is hid with*  
 ' *thee in God*, and that my *spirit is returned to*  
 ' *Him that gave it—to Thee, the First and the*  
 ' *Last*, my Author and my End—my God  
 ' and my All.'

## SECTION III.

*An Address to Perfect Christians : Shewing them how to walk worthy of God, who hath called them unto his kingdom and glory.*

**Y**E have not attended to the preceding directions in vain, O ye men of God, who have mixed faith with your evangelical requests. The God who says, *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it*;—the gracious God who declares, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*:—that faithful, covenant-keeping God has now **FILLED** you with all righteousness, peace, and joy in believing. The brightness of Christ's appearing has destroyed the indwelling man of sin. He who had slain the lion and the bear (he who had already done so great things for you) has now crowned all his blessings by slaying the Goliath within. Aspiring, unbelieving self is fallen before the victorious son of David. The quick and powerful word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, has pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The carnal mind is cut off: The circumcision of the heart, through  
the

*the spirit*, has fully taken place in your breasts: And now, *that mind is in you which was also in Christ Jesus*: Ye are *spiritually minded*: Loving God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourselves, ye are full of goodness, ye keep the commandments, ye observe the law of liberty, ye fulfil the law of Christ. Of him ye have learned to be meek and lowly in heart. Ye have FULLY taken his yoke upon you; in so doing ye have found a sweet abiding rest unto your souls; and from blessed experience ye can say, "Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light:—His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace: All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies." The beatitudes are sensibly yours: and the charity described by St. Paul, has the same place in your breasts, which the tables of the law had in the ark of the covenant. Ye are the living temples of the trinity: The Father is your life, the Son your light, the Spirit your love: Ye are truly baptized into the mystery of God, ye continue to drink into one spirit, and thus ye enjoy the grace of both sacraments. There is an end of your *Lo here!* and *Lo there!* The kingdom of God is now established within you. Christ's righteousness, peace, and joy are rooted in your breasts by the Holy Ghost given unto you, as an abiding guide and indwelling comforter. Your introverted eye of faith looks at God,

who gently guides you with his eye into all the truth necessary to make you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. Simplicity of intention keeps darkness out of your mind, and purity of affection keeps wrong fires out of your breast. By the former, ye are without guile; by the latter, ye are without envy. Your *passive* will instantly melts into the will of God; and on all occasions you meekly say, *Not my will, O Father, but thine be done*: Thus are ye always ready to SUFFER what ye are called to suffer. Your *active* will evermore says, *Speak, Lord; thy servant heareth*: *What wouldst thou have me to do?* It is my meat and drink to do the will of my heavenly Father: Thus are ye always ready to DO whatsoever ye are convinced that God calls you to do; and whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, ye do all to the glory of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus-Christ; rejoicing evermore; praying without ceasing; in every thing giving thanks; solemnly looking for, and hastening unto the hour of your dissolution, and the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and your soul, being cloathed with a celestial body, shall be able to do celestial services to the God of your life.

In this blessed state of Christian Perfection, the holy anointing, which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, unless it be as the same anointing teacheth.

teacheth. Agreeably therefore, to that anointing, which teacheth by a variety of means, which formerly taught a prophet by an *ass*, and daily instructs God's children by the *ant*, I shall venture to set before you some important directions, which the Holy Ghost has already suggested to your *pure minds*: For *I would not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance, and giving you some hints, which it is safe for you frequently to meditate upon.*

I. Adam, you know, lost his *human* perfection in *paradise*: Satan lost his *angelic* perfection in *heaven*: The devil thrust sore at Christ in the *wilderness*, to throw him down from his *mediatorial* perfection: And St. Paul, in the same epistles where he professes not only *Christian*, but *Apostolic* Perfection also (Phil. iii. 15. 1. Cor. ii. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 11.) informs us, that he continued to *run for the crown of heavenly perfection* like a man, who might not only lose his crown of *Christian* Perfection, but become a reprobate, and be cast away. 1 Cor. ix. 25—27. And therefore *so run ye also, that no man take your crown of Christian Perfection in this world, and that ye may obtain your crown of angelic perfection in the world to come. Still keep your body under. Still guard your senses. Still watch your own heart; and stedfast in*  
the

*the faith, still resist the devil, that he may flee from you, remembering the words of the Captain of your salvation; "What I say unto you, "I say unto all, Watch.—He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."*

'We do not find,' (says Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*) 'any general state described in scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this was impossible, it would be that of those who are sanctified, who are *Fathers in Christ*, who rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. But it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are sanctified may yet fall and perish, Heb. x. 29. Even *Fathers in Christ* need that warning, *Love not the world*, 1 John ii. 15. They who rejoice, pray, and give thanks without ceasing, may nevertheless quench the spirit, 1 Thes. v. 16, &c. Nay, even they who are sealed unto the day of redemption, may yet grieve the Holy Spirit of God, Eph. v. 30.'

The doctrine of the absolute perseverance of the saints, is the first card which the devil played against man: "*Ye shall not surely die, "if ye break the law of your perfection."*" This fatal card won the game. Mankind and paradise were lost. See the artful serpent transforming himself into an angel of light.



*on the pinnacle of the temple :* There he plays  
 over again his old game against the Son of  
 God. Out of the Bible he pulls the very  
 card which had won our first parents, and  
 swept paradise with the besom of destruction.  
*Cast thyself down,* says he, for it is written,  
 that all things shall work together for thy  
 good, thy very falls not excepted : *He shall*  
*give his angels charge concerning thee, and in*  
*their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any*  
*time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* The  
 tempter (thanks be to Christ) lost his game  
 at that time ; but he did not lose his card ;  
 and it is probable that he will play it round  
 against you all ; only with some variation.  
 Let me mention one among a thousand. He  
 promised our Lord that God's *angels* should  
*bear him up in their hands, if he threw himself*  
*down ;* and it is not unlikely that he will pro-  
 mise you greater things still. Nor should I  
 wonder if he was bold enough to hint, that,  
 when you cast yourselves down, *God himself*  
*shall bear you up in his HANDS, yea, in his*  
*ARMS of everlasting love.* O ye men of God,  
 learn wisdom by the fall of *Adam !* O ye  
*anointed* sons of the Most High, learn watch-  
 fulness by the conduct of Christ ! If he was  
 afraid to tempt the Lord his God, will ye dare  
 to do it ? If he rejected as poison, the hook  
 of the *absolute* perseverance of the saints,  
 though it was baited with scripture, will ye  
 swallow it down, as if it were *honey out of the*  
rock

*rock of ages? No; through faith in Christ, the scriptures have made you wise unto salvation. You will not only fly with all speed from evil, but from the very appearance of evil: And when you stand on the brink of a temptation, far from entering into it, under any pretence whatever, you will leap back into the bosom of him who says, Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: for though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. I grant that (evangelically-speaking) the weakness of the flesh is not sin; but yet the deceitfulness of sin creeps in at this door; and by this means not a few of God's children, after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the sanctifying knowledge of Christ, under plausible pretences, have been again entangled therein and overcome. Let their falls make you cautious. Ye have put on the whole armour of God: O keep it on, and use it with all prayer, that ye may, to the last, stand complete in Christ, and be more than conquerors through him who hath loved you.*

II. Remember that every one who is perfect, shall be as his master. Now if your master was tempted and assaulted to the last;—if to the last he watched and prayed; using all the means of grace himself, and enforcing the use of them upon others;—if to the last he fought against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and did not put off the harness till he had put off the body: think not yourselves above him: but

Go

*Go and do likewise.* If he did not regain paradise for you, without going through the most complete renunciation of all the good things of this world, and without submitting to the severe stroke of his last enemy, *death*; be content to be *perfect as he was*; nor fancy that *your* flesh and blood can inherit the celestial kingdom of God, when the flesh and blood which *Emmanuel* himself assumed from a pure virgin, could not inherit it without passing under the cherub's flaming sword: I mean without going through the gates of death.

III. Ye are not complete in wisdom. Perfect love does not imply perfect knowledge: but perfect humility, and perfect readiness to receive instruction. Remember therefore, that if ever ye shew, that ye are *above* being instructed by a fisherman who teaches according to the divine anointing, ye will shew that ye are fallen from a perfection of humility into a perfection of pride.

IV. Do not confound *angelical*, with *christian* perfection. *Uninterrupted* transports of praise, and ceaseless raptures of joy, do not belong to *christian*, but to *angelical* perfection. Our feeble frame can bear but a few drops of that glorious cup. In general that *new wine* is too strong for our *old bottles*; that power is too excellent for our *earthen*, cracked *vessels*; but, weak as they are, they can bear a fulness of *meekness*, of *resignation*, of *humility*, and of that *love*, which is willing  
to

to obey unto death. If God indulges you with extasies, and extraordinary revelations; be thankful for them: But be *not exalted above measure by them*: Take care lest enthusiastic delusions mix themselves with them: And remember, that your *christian* perfection does not so much consist in *building a tabernacle upon mount Tabor*, to rest and enjoy rare sights there, as in resolutely taking up the cross, and following Christ to the palace of a proud *Caiaphas*, to the judgment-hall of an unjust *Pilate*, and to the top of an ignominious *Calvary*. Ye never READ in your bibles, "Let that glory be upon you, which was also upon St. Stephen, when he looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing on the right hand of God." But ye have frequently read there, *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

See him on that ignominious gibbet: he hangs—abandoned by his friends—surrounded by his foes—condemned by the rich—insulted by the poor. He hangs;—a worm, and no man—a very scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people. All that see him, laugh him to scorn. They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He  
trusted

trusted in God that he would deliver him :  
 Let him deliver him, if he will have him.—  
 There is none to help him : One of his apostles denies, another sells him ; and the rest run away. Many oxen are come about him :—Fat bulls of Basan close him in on every side—they gape upon him with their mouths, as it were a ramping lion :—he is poured out like water—his heart in the midst of his body is like melting wax :—his strength is dried up like a potsherd :—his tongue cleaveth to his gums :—he is going into the dust of death :—The counsel of the wicked layeth siege against him :—His hands and his feet are pierced :—You may tell all his bones ;—They stand staring and looking upon him :—They part his garments among them, and cast lots for the only remains of his property, his plain, seamless vesture. Both suns, the visible and the invisible, seem eclipsed. No cheering beam of created light gilds his gloomy prospect. No smile of his heavenly Father supports his agonizing soul. No cordial (unless it be vinegar and gall) revives his sinking spirits. He has nothing left except *his God*. But *his God* is enough for him. In *his God* he has all things. And though his soul is *seized with sorrow even unto death* ; yet it hangs more firmly upon *his God* by a naked faith, than his lacerated body does on the cross by the clinched nails. The perfection of his love shines in all its christian glory.

He

He not only forgives his insulting foes, and bloody persecutors ; but in the highest point of his passion he forgets his own wants, and thirsts after their eternal happiness. Together with his blood, he pours out his soul for them ; and excusing them all he can, he says, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* O ye adult sons of God, in this glass behold all with open face the glory of your Redeemer's forgiving, praying love ; and, as ye behold it, be changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the loving spirit of the Lord.

V. This lesson is deep : but he may teach you one deeper still. By a strong sympathy with him in all his sufferings, he may call you to *know him* every way crucified. Stern Justice thunders from heaven, *Awake, O sword, against the man who is my fellow !* The sword awakes—the sword goes through his soul—the flaming sword is quenched in his blood. But is one *sinew* of his perfect faith cut, one FIBRE of his perfect resignation injured by the astonishing blow ? No ; *his God* slays him, and yet he trusts in *his God*. By the noblest of all ventures, in the most dreadful of all storms, he meekly bows his head, and shelters his departing soul in the bosom of *his God*.—*“ My God ! My God !* says he, though all thy comforts have *forsaken me*, and all thy storms and waves go over me, yet into **THY** hands I commend my spirit. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell ; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one



to see corruption. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand (where I shall soon SIT) there are pleasures for evermore.*" What a pattern of perfect confidence! O ye Perfect Christians, be ambitious to ascend to those amazing heights of Christ's perfection: *For ever hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us; leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who knew no sin, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but COMMITTED HIMSELF to him that judgeth righteously.* If this is your high calling on earth, rest not, O ye Fathers in Christ, till your patient hope and perfect confidence in God, have got their last victory over your last enemy—the king of terrors.

' The ground of a thousand mistakes (says  
' Mr. Wesley) is, the not considering deeply,  
' that love is the highest gift of God, *humble,*  
' *gentle, patient love*: that all visions, revela-  
' tions, manifestations whatever, are little  
' things compared to love.—It were well  
' you should be thoroughly sensible of this:  
' The heaven of heavens is love. There is  
' nothing higher in religion: there is, in  
' effect, nothing else. If you look for any  
' thing but *more love*, you are looking wide  
' of the mark, you are getting out of the  
' royal way. And when you are asking  
' others, Have you received this or that  
' blessing? if you mean any thing but *more*  
' *love*, you mean wrong: you are leading  
F ' them

‘ them out of the way, and putting them  
 ‘ upon a false scent. Settle it then in your  
 ‘ heart, that from the moment God has  
 ‘ saved you from all sin, you are to aim at  
 ‘ nothing but *more* of that love described in  
 ‘ the thirteenth of the Corinthians. You can  
 ‘ go no higher than this, till you are carried  
 ‘ into Abraham’s bosom.’

VI. Love is humble. ‘ Be therefore  
 ‘ *clothed with humility,*’ says Mr. Wesley:  
 ‘ Let it not only fill, but cover you all over.  
 ‘ Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in  
 ‘ all your words and actions. Let all you  
 ‘ speak and do, shew that you are little, and  
 ‘ base, and mean, and vile in your own  
 ‘ eyes. As one instance of this, be always  
 ‘ ready to own any fault you have been in.  
 ‘ If you have at any time thought, or spoke,  
 ‘ or acted wrong, be not backward to ac-  
 ‘ knowledge it. Never dream that this  
 ‘ will hurt the cause of God: no, it will  
 ‘ further it. Be therefore open and frank,  
 ‘ when you are taxed with any thing; Let  
 ‘ it appear just as it is; and you will thereby  
 ‘ not hinder, but adorn the gospel.’ Why  
 should you be more backward in acknow-  
 ledging your *failings*, than in confessing that  
 ye do not pretend to *infallibility*? St. Paul  
 was perfect in the love which casts out *fear*,  
 and therefore he boldly reprov’d the high  
 priest: But when he reprov’d him more  
 shortly than the fifth commandment allows,  
 he directly confessed his mistake, and set his  
 seal

seal to the importance of the duty, in which  
 he had been *inadvertantly* wanting. Then  
*Paul said, I KNEW NOT, brethren, that he*  
*was the high priest: For it is written, thou shalt*  
*not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.* St. John  
 was perfect in the courteous, humble love,  
 which brings us down at the feet of all. His  
 courtesy, his humility, and the dazzling glory,  
 which beamed forth from a divine messenger  
 (whom he apprehended to be more than a  
 creature) betrayed him into a fault contrary  
 to that of St. Paul; but far from concealing  
 it, he openly confessed it, and published his  
 confession for the edification of all the  
 churches. *When I had heard and seen* (says he)  
*I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel*  
*who shewed me these things.* Then saith he unto  
*me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow ser-*  
*vant.* Christian Perfection shines as much in  
 the child-like simplicity with which the per-  
 fect readily acknowledge their faults; as it  
 does in the manly steadiness, with which they  
*resist unto blood, striving against sin.*

VII. If humble love makes us frankly  
 confess our *faults*, much more does it incline  
 us to own ourselves *sinners—miserable sinners*  
 before that God, whom we have so frequent-  
 ly offended. I need not remind you that  
*your bodies are dead because of sin.* You see it,  
*you feel it*, and therefore, so long as you  
 dwell in a prison of flesh and blood, which  
*death* (the revenger of *sin*) is to pull down;  
 so long as your final justification (as pardoned

and sanctified *sinners*) has not taken place: Yea, so long as you break the law of *paradisiacal* perfection, under which you were *originally* placed, it is meet, right, and your bounden duty to consider yourselves as *sinners*, who, (as transgressors of the law of innocence and the law of liberty) are guilty of death—of eternal death. St. Paul did so after he *was come to mount Sion, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*. He still looked upon himself as the *chief of sinners*, because he HAD BEEN a daring blasphemer of Christ, and a fierce persecutor of his people. *Christ*, says he, came to save sinners, of who I AM CHIEF. The reason is plain Matter of fact is, and will be matter of fact to all eternity. According to the doctrines of grace and justice, and before the throne of God's mercy and holiness, a *sinner pardoned* and *sanctified* must, in the very nature of things be considered as a *sinner*, for if you consider him as a *saint*, absolutely abstracted from the character of a *sinner*, how can he be a *pardoned* and *sanctified* SINNER? To all eternity therefore, but much more while *death (the wages of sin)* is at your heels, and while you are going to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive your final sentence of absolution or condemnation; it will become you to say with St. Paul, *We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely (AS SINNERS) by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ—*

*Christ*—although we are justified *judicially* AS BELIEVERS, through faith;—AS OBE-  
DIENT BELIEVERS, through the obedi-  
ence of faith; and AS PERFECT CHRIS-  
TIANs, through Christian Perfection.

VIII. Humble love *becomes all things* (but  
sin) to all men, although it delights most in  
those who are most holy. Ye may, and  
ought to set your love of peculiar compla-  
cency upon God's dearest children—upon  
those who, like yourselves, *excel in virtue*,  
because they more strongly reflect the image  
of the God of LOVE, the HOLY one of Israel.  
But if ye despise the weak, and are above  
lending them an helping hand; ye are fallen  
from Christian Perfection, which teaches us  
to *bear one another's burdens*, especially the  
burdens of the *weak*. Imitate therefore the  
tenderness and wisdom of the good Shepherd,  
who carries the *lambs* in his bosom, gently  
leads the sheep which are *with young*, feeds  
with milk those who cannot bear strong  
meat, and says to his imperfect disciples, *I*  
*have many things to say to you, but ye cannot*  
*bear them now.*

IX. *Where the loving spirit of the Lord is,*  
*there is liberty.* Keep therefore at the utmost  
distance from the shackles of a narrow, pre-  
judiced, bigoted spirit. The moment you  
confine your love to the people who think  
just as you do, and your regard to the prea-  
chers who exactly suit your taste, you fall  
from perfection and turn bigots. 'I en-

‘ treat you,’ (says Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account*) ‘ beware of *bigotry*. Let not your  
 ‘ love or beneficence, be confined to *Metho-*  
 ‘ *dists* (so called) only: much less to that  
 ‘ very small part of them, who seem to be  
 ‘ renewed in love: or to those who believe  
 ‘ your’s and their report. O make not this  
 ‘ your *Shibboleth*.’—On the contrary, as ye  
 have time and ability, *do good to all men*.  
 Let your benevolence shine upon all: let  
 your charity send its cherishing beams to-  
 wards all, in proper degrees. So shall ye  
 be *perfect as your heavenly Father, who maketh*  
*his sun to shine upon all*; although he sends  
 the brightest and warmest beams of his  
 favour upon the *household of faith*, and re-  
 serves his richest bounties for those, who lay  
 out their five talents to the best advantage.

X. Love, pure love, is satisfied with the  
*supreme good*—with *God*. ‘ Beware then (says  
 ‘ the same author) of desiring any thing but  
 ‘ *him*. Now you desire nothing else. Every  
 ‘ other desire is driven out: see that none  
 ‘ enter in again. *Keep thyself pure: Let your*  
 ‘ *eye remain single, and your whole body shall be*  
 ‘ *full of light*. Admit no desire of pleasing  
 ‘ food, or any other pleasure of sense: no  
 ‘ desire of pleasing the eye or the imagina-  
 ‘ tion: no desire of money, of praise, or  
 ‘ esteem; of happiness in any creature. You  
 ‘ *may bring these desires back; but you need*  
 ‘ *not; you may feel them no more. O stand*  
 ‘ *fast*



' *fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made*  
 ' *you free.* Be patterns to all of denying  
 ' yourselves, and taking up your cross daily.  
 ' Let them see that you make no account of  
 ' any pleasure, which does not bring you  
 ' nearer to God; nor regard any pain which  
 ' does: that you simply aim at pleasing him,  
 ' whether by *doing* or *suffering*: that the con-  
 ' stant language of your heart, with regard  
 ' to pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour,  
 ' riches or poverty, is,

' All's alike to me, so I

' In my Lord may live and die!'

XI. The *best* soldiers are sent upon the  
 most difficult and dangerous expeditions:  
 and as you are the best soldiers of Jesus  
 Christ, ye will probably be called to drink  
 deepest of his cup, and to carry the heaviest  
 burdens. 'Expect contradiction and oppo-  
 ' sition,' (says the judicious divine whom I  
 have just quoted) 'together with crosses of  
 ' various kinds. Consider the words of St.  
 ' Paul, *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ,*  
 ' *for his sake, as a fruit of his death and in-*  
 ' *tercession for you, not only to believe, but also*  
 ' *to SUFFER for his sake,* Phil. i. 23. *It is*  
 ' *given!* God gives you this opposition or  
 ' reproach: it is a fresh token of his love.  
 ' And will you disown the giver? Or spurn  
 ' the gift, and count it a misfortune? Will  
 ' you not rather say, "Father, the hour is

“ come, that thou shouldst be glorified.  
 “ Now thou givest thy child to suffer some-  
 “ thing for thee. Do with me according to  
 “ thy will.”—‘ Know that these things, far  
 ‘ from being *hindrances* to the work of God,  
 ‘ or to your soul, unless by your own fault,  
 ‘ are not only unavoidable in the course of  
 ‘ providence, but profitable, yea, necessary  
 ‘ for you. Therefore receive them from  
 ‘ God (not from chance) with willingness,  
 ‘ with thankfulness. Receive them from  
 ‘ men with humility, meekness, yieldingness,  
 ‘ gentleness, sweetness.’

Love can never do, nor suffer too much  
 for its divine object. Be then ambitious,  
 like St. Paul, to be made perfect in *sufferings*.  
 I have already observed that the apostle, not  
 satisfied to be a perfect christian, would also  
 be a perfect martyr; earnestly desiring to  
*know the fellowship of Christ's* (utmost) *suffer-*  
*ings*. Follow him, as he followed his suffer-  
 ing, crucified Lord. Your feet are shod  
 with the preparation of the gospel of peace,  
 run after them both in the race of obedience,  
 for the crown of martyrdom, if *that* crown be  
 reserved for you. And if ye miss the crown  
 of those who are martyrs in *deed*, ye shall  
 however receive the reward of those who  
 are martyrs in *intention*—the crown of righ-  
 teousness and angelical perfection.

XII. But do not so desire to follow Christ  
 to the garden of *Gethsamane*, as to refuse fol-  
 lowing him *now* to the carpenter's shop, if  
 providence

providence *now* calls you to it. Do not lose the present day by idly looking back at *yesterday*, or foolishly antedating the cares of *to-morrow*: But wisely use every hour; spending them as one who stands on the verge of time—on the border of eternity, and who has his work cut out by a wise providence from moment to moment. Never therefore neglect using the two talents you have *now*, and doing the duty which is *now* incumbent upon you. Should you be tempted to it, under the plausible pretence of waiting for a greater number of talents; remember that God doubles our talents in the way of duty. Therefore, ‘to continual watchfulness and prayer, add continual employment,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘for grace flies a vacuum as well as nature; the devil fills whatever God does not fill’ . . . . ‘As *by works faith is made perfect*, the completing or destroying the work of faith, and enjoying the favour or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience.’—If you forget this, you will hardly do *now* whatsoever your hand findeth to do. Much less will you do it with *all* your might—for God—for eternity.

XIII. Love is modest: it rather inclines to bashfulness and silence, than to talkative forwardness. *In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin: Be therefore slow to speak; nor cast your pearls before those who cannot distinguish them from pebbles.* Nevertheless,

when you are solemnly called upon, to bear testimony to the truth, and to say *what great things God has done for you*; it would be cowardice, or false prudence, not to do it with humility. *Be then always ready to give an answer to every man who (properly) asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness (without fluttering anxiety) and with fear (with a reverential awe of God upon your minds)* 1 Pet. iii. 15. The perfect are *burning and shining lights*, and our Lord intimates, that, *as a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all the house*: so God does not light the candle of perfect love to hide it in a corner, but to give light to all those who are within the reach of its brightness. If diamonds glitter, if stars shine, if flowers display their colours, and perfumes diffuse their fragrance, to the honour of the father of lights, and author of every good gift: If, without self-seeking, *they disclose his glory to the utmost of their power, why should ye not go, and do likewise?* Gold answers its most valuable end when it is brought to light, and made to circulate for charitable and pious uses; and not when it lies concealed in a miser's strong box, or in the dark bosom of a mine. But when you lay out your spiritual gold for proper uses, beware of imitating the vanity of those cockcombs, who, as often as they are about to pay for a trifle, pull out a handful of gold, merely to make a shew of their wealth.

XIV. Love *rejoiceth in the* (display of an edifying) *truth*. Fact is fact all the world over. If you can say to the glory of God, that you *are alive*, and *feel very well*, when you do so; why could you not also testify to his honour, that you *live not*, but that *Christ liveth in you*; if you really find that this is your experience? Did not St. John say, *Our love is made perfect—because as he is, so ARE WE in this world?* Did not St. Paul write, *The righteousness of the law is fulfilled IN US, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit?* Did he not with the same simplicity aver, that although *he had nothing*, and was *sorrowful*, yet he *possessed all things*, and was *always rejoicing*.

Hence it appears, that, with respect to declaring or concealing what God has done for your soul, the line of your duty runs exactly between the *proud forwardness* of some stiff pharisees, and the *voluntary humility* of some stiff mystics. The former vainly boast of more than they experience: and, by that means, they set up the cursed idol of *self*: The latter ungratefully hide the *wonderful works of God*, which the primitive Christians *spoke* publicly in a variety of languages; and by this means, they refuse to exalt their gracious benefactor, *Christ*. The first error is undoubtedly more odious than the second; but what need is there of leaning to either? Would you avoid them both? Let your TEMPERS and LIVES *always* declare, that perfect love is attainable in this life. And when you have  
a *proper*

a *proper* call to declare it with your *lips* and *pens*, do it without forwardness, to the glory of God; do it with simplicity, for the edification of your neighbour; do it with *godly jealousy*, lest ye should shew the treasures of divine grace in your hearts, with the same *self-complacence*, with which king *Hezekiah* shewed his treasures, and the golden vessels of the temple to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, remembering what a dreadful curse this piece of vanity pulled down upon him: *And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left saith the Lord.* If God so severely punished *Hezekiah's* pride, how properly does St. Peter charge believers to give **WITH FEAR** an account of the grace which is in them! and how careful should you be to observe his important charge!

XV. If you will keep at the utmost distance from the vanity which proved so fatal to good king *Hezekiah*, follow an excellent direction of Mr. Wesley. ‘ When you have  
 ‘ done any thing for God, or received any  
 ‘ favour from him, retire, if not into your *clo-*  
 ‘ *set*, into your *heart*, and say, “ I come, Lord,  
 “ to restore to thee what thou hast given,  
 “ and I freely relinquish it, to enter again  
 “ into my own nothingness. For what is  
 “ the most perfect creature in heaven or  
 “ earth in thy presence, but a void, capable  
 “ of



“ of being filled with thee and by thee, as  
 “ the air which is void and dark, is capable  
 “ of being filled with the light of the sun?  
 “ Grant therefore, O Lord, that I may never  
 “ appropriate thy grace to myself, any more  
 “ than the air appropriates to itself the light  
 “ of the sun, who withdraws it every day to  
 “ restore it the next ; there being nothing in  
 “ the air, that either appropriates his light  
 “ or resists it. O give me the same facility  
 “ of receiving and restoring *thy* grace and  
 “ good works! I say, *thine*: for I acknow-  
 “ ledge that the root from which they spring,  
 “ is in thee, and not in me.”—‘ The true  
 ‘ means to be filled anew with the riches of  
 ‘ grace, is thus to strip ourselves of it: with-  
 ‘ out this, it is extremely difficult not to  
 ‘ faint in the practice of good works.—And  
 ‘ therefore, that your works may receive  
 ‘ their last perfection, let them lose them-  
 ‘ selves in God. This is a kind of death to  
 ‘ them, resembling that of our bodies, which  
 ‘ will not attain their highest life, their immor-  
 ‘ tality, till they lose themselves in the glory  
 ‘ of our souls, or rather of God, wherewith  
 ‘ they shall be filled. And it is only what  
 ‘ they had of earthly and mortal, which good  
 ‘ works lose by this spiritual death.’

XVI. Would you see this deep precept  
 put in practice? Consider St. Paul. Already  
 possessed of Christian Perfection he does  
 good works from morning to night: He

WATTS

*warms every one night and day with tears. He carries the gospel from east to west. Wherever he stops, he plants a church at the hazard of his life. But instead of resting in his present perfection, and in the good works which spring from it, he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; unweariedly following after, if that he may apprehend that (perfection) for which also he is apprehended of Christ Jesus,—that celestial perfection, of which he got lively ideas, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. With what amazing ardour does he run his race of Christian Perfection for the prize of that higher perfection! How does he forget the works of yesterday, when he lays himself out for God to-day! Though dead, he yet speaketh, nor can an Address to Perfect Christians be closed by a more proper speech than his. Brethren, says he, Be followers of me—I count not myself to have apprehended (my angelical perfection) but **THIS ONE THING I DO**, forgetting those things which are behind (settling in none of my former experiences, resting in none of my good works) and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the (celestial) prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are PERFECT, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God will reveal even this unto you. In the mean time you may*  
sing

sing the following hymn of the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, which is descriptive of the destruction of corrupt self-will, and expressive of the absolute resignation which characterises a perfect believer.

To do, or not to do; to have,  
Or not to have, I leave to Thee:  
To be, or not to be I leave:

Thy only will be done in me.  
All my requests are lost in one,  
Father, thy only will be done.

Suffice that for the season past,  
Myself in things divine I sought,  
For comforts cried with eager haste,  
And murmur'd that I found them not:  
I leave it now to thee alone,  
Father, thy only will be done.

Thy gifts I clamour for no more,  
Or selfishly thy grace require,  
An evil heart to varnish o'er;  
Jesus the Giver I desire;  
After the flesh no longer known:  
Father, thy only will be done.

Welcome alike the crown or cross;  
Trouble I cannot ask, nor peace,  
Nor toil, nor rest, nor gain, nor loss,  
Nor joy, nor grief, nor pain, nor ease,  
Nor life, nor death: but ever groan,  
Father, thy only will be done.

This

This hymn suits all the believers who are at the bottom of mount Sion, and begin to join the spirits of just men made perfect. But when the triumphal chariot of perfect love *gloriously* carries you to the top of perfection's hill;—when you are raised far above the *common* heights of the perfect—when you are almost translated into glory like Elijah, *then* you may sing another hymn of the same Christian poet.

Who in Jesus confide,  
We are bold to out-ride  
The storms of affliction beneath:  
With the prophet we soar  
To that heavenly shore,  
And out-fly all the arrows of death.

By Faith WE ARE COME  
To our PERMANENT HOME;  
By Hope we THE RAPTURE IMPROVE:  
By love WE STILL RISE,  
And LOOK DOWN on the skies---  
For the HEAVEN OF HEAVENS IS LOVE!

Who on earth can conceive,  
How happy WE LIVE  
In the city of God the great King!  
What a concert of praise,  
When our Jesus's grace  
The whole heavenly company sing!

But when you cannot rise to these raptu-  
rous

rous heights of perfection, you need not give up your shield. You may still rank among the perfect, if you can heartily join in this version of Psa. cxxxi.

Lord, thou dost the grace impart  
Poor IN SPIRIT, MEEK IN HEART,  
I will as my Master be  
ROOTED in humility.

Now, dear Lord, that thee I know,  
Nothing will I seek below,  
Aim at nothing great or high  
LOWLY both IN HEART and EYE.

SIMPLE, TEACHABLE, and MILD,  
Aw'd into a LITTLE CHILD,  
Quiet now without my food,  
Wean'd from ev'ry creature good.

Hangs my new-born soul on thee,  
Kept from all idolatry;  
Nothing wants beneath, above,  
Happy, happy in thy love.

That your earthen vessels may be filled with this love till they break, and you enjoy the divine object of your faith without an interposing veil of gross flesh and blood, is the wish of one who sincerely praises God on your account, and ardently prays,

“ Make

" Make up thy jewels, Lord, and shew  
" The glorious, spotless church below.  
" The fellowship of saints make known;  
" And oh! my God, might I be one!

" O might my lot be cast with *these*,  
" The least of Jesu's witnesses!  
" O that my Lord would count me meet  
" To wash his dear disciples feet!

" To wait upon his saints below!  
" On gospel-errands for them go!  
" Enjoy the grace to angels given!  
" And serve the royal heirs of heaven!"

END OF THE EXTRACT, &c.



*To a Friend in Dublin.*

YORK,---1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU ask, "Do I think there are degrees in sanctification?" I certainly do. And "What is the lowest degree thereof?" Sanctification begins at justification. In the same moment that we are justified, we are also born again, and therefore sanctified in part. But you mean *entire* sanctification. The lowest degree of this, in the very nature of the thing, is, the being cleansed from all inbred-sin : From unbelief, pride, anger, peevishness, murmuring, sinful self-love, foolish desires, and undue attachments to persons and things ; from all that is contrary to the love of God and our neighbour, to the mind which was also in Christ Jesus. For whatever remains in us contrary to these, is properly sin ; and of consequence, so far we are not sanctified. We may be *entirely* sanctified, and yet tempted to sin : For sin and temptation are essentially different. Our Lord was tempted to despair, presumption, and apostacy ; that is, the temptation was offered, the bait was laid for him, but he totally rejected it. And he has nowhere promised to exempt us from temptation, but only that with the temptation he will make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it. If when we are tempted (let the temptation be what it may) we steadfastly follow our Lord's example, and, like him, resist and reject it, we do not sin, but conquer through him that hath loved us. On the other hand, if sin in any degree remain in our heart, we are not *entirely* sanctified : Sanctification, in this sense, being nothing less than the destruction of all indwelling sin.

Perhaps you will say, If this be the lowest degree of *entire* sanctification, what is the highest degree of it? I answer, Having the same mind which was also  
in

in Christ Jesus: Being filled with all the fulness of God: Living and dying complete in the will of him who hath called us to his kingdom and glory. The highest degree of sanctification is prayed for by our Lord in behalf of all that believe on him, John xvii. 20---23---26. The fruits of it are described by him in his sermon on mount, particularly in Matt. v. 44---48. by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 4---7. by St. James iii. 17. by St. Peter, 2 Epist. i. 5---9. and by St. John, 1 Epist. ii. 3---6---10. iii. 21---24. iv. 16---21. I shall only here insert the words of St. John, which are,---*Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight: And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandment dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loveth his brother also.---He who bears these fruits is a father in Christ.*

St. Paul had attained the very summit of Christian Perfection, not only as it respects receiving, but also  
doing,

doing, and suffering the will of God, when he testified, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day,* 2 Tim. iv. 6--8. If any ask how he attained to all this? he tells them, Phil. iii. 13, 14. *This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Perhaps some may think I place the mark too high; but I hope it is no higher than the scriptures place it, and I dare not fix it any lower. But may it not discourage some from seeking after it? It may, but it need not; there being no just cause why it should: For the Lord is as able to bring all his faithful children to the greatest depths and heights of holiness, as he was to bring the children of Israel into the promised land. He can as easily remove and cast down whatsoever opposes them, as he divided Jordan, and overthrew the walls of Jericho. And whoever, like Caleb and Joshua, follow him fully, shall be brought into the wealthy place. They shall be redeemed from all iniquity, and filled with all the fulness of God. All discouragement vanishes when we consider, 1st. This great salvation is all from the Lord, with whom all things are possible. He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. He says, "*I will, be thou clean;*" and immediately the leprosy of sin departs;---"*Behold, I make all things new!*" and lo! a new creation of light, life, love, holiness, and happiness arises in the heart, "where only Christ is heard to speak, where Jesus reigns alone."---2dly. That it is all received by faith. The penitent and obedient believer sees the word, the promise, the oath of him who cannot lie; firmly (as well he may) believes the truth thereof; stedfastly and in the full confidence of hope, looks to the *promise-making* and *promise-fulfilling* God, being fully persuaded, that what he has promised he is both able and willing *now* to perform: And according to his faith it is done unto him. By believing with his whole heart unto righteousness, he sets to his seal

seal that God is true, and God seals him with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, thereby stamping his whole image upon his soul. Thus,

“ Faith, mighty faith, the *promise* sees,

“ And looks to *that* alone ;

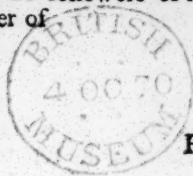
“ Laughs at *impossibilities*,

“ And cries, it *shall* be done.”

Mean-time, we have infinite need to let whatever grace we have received, be seen in us, more by its own fruits, than by our talk concerning it. The blessed Jesus is our pattern. Let us study his holy life day and night, and seek, in all things, a perfect conformity to him, who, though he was equal with God, was content to be *as a worm and no man*---made himself of no reputation---took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He is the *most perfect* christian, who is most like his humble, patient, loving, and obedient Lord and Saviour. I think some persons among us have been hurt, by being set up, and extolled for their great attainments in religion. Christ is the *Lily of the vallies*. He dwells in humble hearts. It is good to lie low, and leave it to the Lord either to exalt or depress us, as he shall see best. I do not write thus, because I think my friend in particular danger from that quarter: by no means. But humility is a lesson which we have all need to be daily learning; and I write to her just as I think for myself. I am sure you agree with me, in believing, that the late Mr. Fletcher was the holiest person you ever saw; the person, who above all others, excelled most in every grace, and yet he made no account of himself in any thing. He was indeed *clothed with humility*. That we may be followers of him, as he was of Christ, is the prayer of

Your sincere Friend,

T. R.



FINIS.

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